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A DISCOURSE OF THE Nature and Offices OF *FRIENDSHIP.*

In a Letter to the most Ingenious and Excellent Mr. Katherine Phillips.

MADAM,

THE wise *Bensirach* advised that we should not consult with a woman concerning her of whom she is jealous, neither with a Coward in matters of War, nor with a Merchant concerning exchange; and some other instances he gives of interested per-

sons, to whom he would not have us hearken in any matter of Counsel. For where ever the interest is *secular* or *vicious*, there the biass is not on the side of *truth* or *reason*, because *these* are seldom serv'd by profit and low regards. But to consult with a friend in the matters of friendship is like consulting with a spiritual person in Religion; they who understand the secrets of Religion, or the interior beauties of friendship are the fittest to give answers in all inquiries concerning the respective subjects; because *reason* and *experience* are on the side of *interest*; and that which in friendship is most *pleasing* and most *useful*, is also most *reasonable* and most *true*; and a friends fairest interest is the best measure of the conducting friendships: and therefore you who are so eminent in friendships could also have given the best answer to your own inquiries, and you could have trusted your own reason, because it is not only greatly instructed by the direct notices of things, but also by great experience in the matter of which you now inquire.

But because I will not use any thing that shall look like an excuse, I will rather give you

you ſuch an account which you can eaſily reprove, then by declining your commands, ſeem more ſafe in my prudence, then open and communicative in my friendſhip to you.

You firſt inquire how far a Dear and a perfect friendſhip is authoriz'd by the principles of Chriſtianity?

To this I anſwer; That the word [*Friendſhip*] in the ſenſe we commonly mean by it, is not ſo much as named in the New-Teſtament; and our Religion takes no notice of it. You think it ſtrange; but read on before you ſpend ſo much as the beginning of a paſſion or a wonder upon it. There is mention of [*Friendſhip with the world,*] and it is ſaid to be *enmity with God*; but the word is no where elſe named, or to any other purpoſe in all the New-Teſtament. It ſpeaks of Friends often; but by *Friends* are meant our acquaintance, or our Kindred, the relatives of our family or our fortune, or our ſect, ſomething of ſociety, or ſomething of kindneſs there is in it; a tenderneſs of appellation and civility, a relation made

by gifts, or by duty, by services and subjection; and I think, I have reason to be confident, that the word *friend* (speaking of humane entercourse) is no other-ways used in the Gospels or Epistles, or Acts of the Apostles: and the reason of it is, the word *friend* is of a large signification; and means all relations and societies, and whatsoever is not *enemy*; but by *friendships*, I suppose you mean, *the greatest love, and the greatest usefulness, and the most open communication, and the noblest sufferings, and the most exemplar faithfulness, and the severest truth, and the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds*, of which brave men and women are capable. But then I must tell you that Christianity hath new christened it, and calls this *Charity*. The Christian knows no enemy he hath; that is, though persons may be injurious to him, and unworthy in themselves, yet he knows none whom he is not first bound to forgive, which is indeed to make them on his part to be no enemies, that is, to make that the word *enemy* shall not be perfectly contrary to *friend*, it shall not be a relative term and signifie something on each hand, a *relative* and a *correlative*;

lative; and then he knows none whom he is not bound to love and pray for, to treat kindly and justly, liberally and obligingly. Christian Charity is Friendship to all the world; and when Friendships were the noblest things in the world, Charity was little, like the Sun drawn in at a chink, or his beams drawn into the centre of a Burning-Glass; but Christian charity is Friendship, expanded like the face of the Sun when it mounts above the Eastern hills: and I was strangely pleas'd when I saw something of this in CICERO; for I have been so push'd at by herds and flocks of People that follow any body that whistles to them, or drives them to pasture, that I am grown afraid of any Truth that seems chargeable with singularity: but therefore I say, glad I was when I saw *Lælius* in *Cicero* discourse thus: *Amicitia ex infinitate generis humani quam conciliavit ipsa natura, contracta res est, & adducta in angustum; ut omnis charitas, aut inter duos, aut inter paucos jungeretur.* Nature hath made friendships, and societies, relations and endearments; and by something or other we relate to all the World; there is enough in every man that is wil-

ling, to make him become our friend; but when men contract friendships, they inclose the Commons; and what Nature intended should be every mans, we make proper to two or three. Friendship is like rivers and the strand of seas, and the air, common to all the World; but Tyrants, and evil customs, wars, and want of love have made them proper and peculiar. But when Christianity came to renew our nature, and to restore our laws, and to increase her privileges, and to make her aptness to become religion, then it was declared that our friendships were to be as universal as our conversation; that is, *actual* to all with whom we converse, and *potentially extended* unto those with whom we did not. For he who was to treat his enemies with forgiveness and prayers, and love and beneficence was indeed to have no enemies, and to have all friends.

So that to your question, how far a Dear and perfect friendship is authoriz'd by the principles of Christianity? The answer is ready and easie. It is warranted to extend to all Mankind; and the more we love, the better

better we are, and the greater our friendſhips are, the dearer we are to God; let them be as Dear, and let them be as perfect, and let them be as many as you can; there is no danger in it; only where the reſtraint begins, there begins our imperfection; it is not ill that you entertain brave friendſhips and worthy ſocieties: it were well if you could *love*, and if you could *benefit* all Mankind; for I conceive that is the ſumme of all friendſhip.

I confeſs this is not to be expected of us in this world; but as all our graces here are but imperfect, that is, at the beſt they are but tendencies to glory, ſo our friendſhips are imperfect too, and but beginnings of a celeſtial friendſhip, by which we ſhall love every one as much as they can be loved. But then ſo we muſt here *in our proportion*; and indeed that is it that can make the difference; we muſt be friends to all: That is, apt to do good, loving them really, and doing to them all the benefits which we can, and which they are capable of. The Friendſhip is equal to all the World, and of it ſelf hath no difference; but is differenced only by accidents,

and by the capacity or incapacity of them that receive it. *Nature* and *Religion* are the *bands* of friendſhips; *excellency* and *uſefulneſs* are its great *indearments*: *ſociety* and *neighbourhood*, that is, the poſſibilities and the circumſtances of converſe are the *determinations* and *actualities* of it. Now when men either are unnatural, or irreligious, they *will not* be friends; when they are neither excellent nor uſeful, *they are not worthy* to be friends; when they are ſtrangers or unknown, they *cannot be friends* actually and practically; but yet, as any man hath any thing of the good, contrary to thoſe evils, ſo he can have and muſt have his ſhare of friendſhip. For thus the Sun is the eye of the World; and he is indifferent to the Negro, or the cold Ruſſian, to them that dwell under the line, and them that ſtand near the Tropicks, the ſcalded Indian, or the poor boy that ſhakes at the foot of the Riphean hills; but the fluxures of the heaven and the earth, the conveniency of abode, and the approaches to the North or South reſpectively charge the emanations of his beams; not that they do not paſs always from him, but that they are not equally received below, but by

periods

periods and changes, by little inlets and reflections, they receive what they can; and ſome have only a dark day and a long night from him, ſnows and white cattel, a miſerable life, and a perpetual harveſt of Catarrhes and Conſumptions, apoplexies and dead palſies; but ſome have ſplendid fires, and aromatick ſpices, rich wines, and well digeſted fruits, great wit and great courage; becauſe they dwell in his eye, and look in his face, and are the Courtiers of the Sun, and wait upon him in his Chambers of the Eaſt; juſt ſo is it in friendſhips: ſome are worthy, and ſome are neceſſary; ſome dwell hard by and are fitted for converſe; Nature joyns ſome to us, and Religion combines us with others; ſociety and accidents, parity of fortune, and equal diſpoſitions do actuate our friendſhips: which of themſelves and in their prime diſpoſition are prepared for all Mankind according as any one can receive them. We ſee this beſt exemplified by two inſtances and expreſſions of friendſhips and charity: *viz. Alms* and *Prayers*; Every one that needs relief is equally the object of our charity; but though to all mankind in equal needs we

ought to be alike in charity; yet we ſignifie this ſeverally and by limits, and diſtinct meaſures: the poor man that is near me, he whom I meet, he whom I love, he whom I fancy, he who did me benefit, he who relates to my family, he rather then another, becauſe my expreſſions being finite and narrow, and cannot extend to all in equal ſignifications, muſt be appropriate to thoſe whoſe circumſtances beſt fit me: and yet even to all I give my alms; to all the World that needs them; I pray for all mankind, I am grieved at every ſad ſtory I hear; I am troubled when I hear of a pretty Bride murdered in her bride-chamber by an ambitious and enrag'd Rival; I ſhed a tear when I am told that a brave King was miſunderſtood, then ſlandered, then impriſoned, and then put to death by evil men: and I can never read the ſtory of the Pariſian Maſſacre, or the Sicilian Veſpers, but my blood curdles, and I am diſorder'd by two or three affections. A good man is a friend to all the World; and he is not truly charitable that does not wiſh well, and do good to all mankind in what he can; but though we muſt pray for

m3

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for all men, yet we ſay ſpecial Litanies for brave Kings and holy Prelates, and the wiſe Guides of ſouls; for our Brethren and Relations, our Wives and Children.

The effect of this conſideration is, that the Univerſal friendſhip of which I ſpeak, muſt be *limited*, becauſe *we are ſo:* In thoſe things where we ſtand next to immenſity and infinity, as in good wiſhes and prayers, and a *readineſs* to benefit all mankind, in theſe our friendſhips muſt not be limited; but in other things which paſs under our hand and eye, our voices and our material exchanges; our hands can reach no further but to our arms end, and our voices can but ſound till the next air be quiet, and therefore they can have entercourſe but within the ſphere of their own activity; our needs and our converſations are ſerved by a few, and they cannot reach to all; where they can, they muſt; but *where it is impoſſible, it cannot be neceſſary.* It muſt therefore follow, that our friendſhips to mankind may admit variety as does our converſation; and as by nature we are made *ſociable* to all, ſo we are *friendly*; but as all cannot actually

ally be of our ſociety, ſo neither can all be admitted to a ſpecial, actual friendſhip; Of *ſome enterconrſes* all men are capable, but *not of all*; Men can pray for one another, and abſtain from doing injuries to all the world, and be deſirous to do all mankind good, and love all men; Now this friendſhip we muſt pay to all becauſe we can, but if we can do no more to all, we muſt ſhew our readineſs to do more good to all by actually doing more good to all them to whom we can.

To ſome we can, and therefore there are nearer friendſhips to ſome then to others, according as there are natural or civil nearneſſes, relations and ſocieties; and as I cannot expreſs my friendſhips to all in equal meaſures and ſignifications, that is, as I cannot do benefits to all alike: ſo neither am I tied to love all alike: for although there is much reaſon to love every man; yet there are more reaſons to love ſome than others; and if I muſt love becauſe there is reaſon I ſhould; then I muſt *love more*, where there is *more reaſon*; and where there's a ſpecial affection and a great readineſs to do good and to delight

delight in certain perſons towards each other, there is that ſpecial charity and indearment which Philoſophy calls *friendſhip*; but our Religion calls *love* or *charity*. Now if the inquiry be concerning this ſpecial friendſhip. 1. *How it can be appropriate*, that is, who to be choſen to it; 2. *how far it may extend*; that is, with what expreſſions ſignified; 3. *how conducted?* The anſwers will depend upon ſuch conſiderations which will be neither uſeleſs nor unpleaſant.

1. There may be a ſpecial friendſhip contracted for any ſpecial excellency whatſoever; becauſe *friendſhips are nothing but love and ſociety mixt together*; that is, *a converſing with them whom we love*; now for whatſoever we can love any one, for that we can be his friend; and ſince every excellency is a degree of amability, every ſuch worthineſs is a juſt and proper motive of friendſhip, or loving converſation. But yet in theſe things there is an order and proportion. Therefore

2. A good man is the beſt friend, and therefore ſooneſt to be choſen, longer to be

be retain'd; and indeed never to be parted with, unless he cease to be that for which he was chosen.

Τῶν δ' ἄλλων ἀρετὴ ποιῦ φίλον ἐστὶ ἄρισθ',
Μήποτε τὸν κακὸν ἄνδρα φίλον ποιεῖσθαι
ἑταῖρον.

Where vertue dwells there friendships make,
But evil neighbourhoods forsake.

But although vertue alone is the worthiest cause of amability, and can weigh down any one consideration; and therefore to a man that is vertuous every man ought to be a friend; yet I do not mean the severe, and philosophical excellencies of some morose persons who are indeed wise unto themselves, and exemplar to others: by *vertue* here I do not mean *justice* and *temperance*, *charity* and *devotion*; for these I am to love the man, but friendship is something more then that: *Friendship is the nearest love and the nearest society* of which the persons are capable: Now justice is a good entercourse for Merchants, as all men are that buy and sell; and temperance

perance makes a Man good company, and helps to make a wise man; but a perfect friendship requires something else, these must be in him that is chosen to be my friend; but for these I do not make him my *privado*; that is, my special and peculiar friend: but if he be *a good man*, then he is properly fitted to be my correlative in the noblest combination.

And for this we have the best warrant in the world: *For a just man scarcely will a man die*; the Syriac interpreter reads it, ὑπὲρ ἀδίκου *for an unjust man scarcely will a man die*; that is, a wicked man is at no hand fit to receive the expression of the greatest friendship; but all the Greek copies that ever I saw, or read of, read it as we do; *for a righteous man or a just man*, that is, justice and righteousness is not the nearest indearment of friendship; but for *a good man* some will even dare to die: that is, for a man that is sweetly disposed, ready to do acts of goodness and to oblige others, to do things useful and profitable, for a loving man, a beneficent, bountiful man, one who delights in doing good to his friend, such a man may have the

the highest friendship; he may have a friend that will die for him. And this is the meaning of *Lælius*: Vertue may be despised, so may Learning and Nobility; *at una est amicitia in rebus humanis de cujus utilitate omnes consentiunt*: only friendship is that thing, which because all know to be useful and profitable, no man can despise; that is χρηστότης, or ἀγαθότης, goodness or beneficence makes friendships. For if he be a good man he will love where he is beloved, and that's the first tie of friendship.

Ἀλλήλους ἐφίλησαν ἴσῳ ζυγῷ.

That was the commendation of the bravest friendship in *Theocritus*,

They lov'd each other with a love
That did in all things equal prove.

——— Ἦ ῥα τοτ' ἦσαν
χρυσεῖοι πάλαι ἄνδρες ὁκ' ἀντιφίλησ' ὁ φιληθείς.

The World was under Saturn's reign
When he that lov'd was lov'd again.

For

For it is impoſſible this nearneſs of friendſhip can be where there is not mutual love; but this is ſecured if I chooſe a good man; for he that is apt enough to begin alone, will never be behind in the relation and correſpondency; and therefore I like the Gentiles Litany well,

Ζεύς μοι τῶν τε φίλων δοίη τισὶν οἵ με φιλεῦσι
Ὄλβιοι οἱ φιλέοντες, ἐπὴν ἴσον ἀντεραῶνται.

Let God give friends to me for my reward,
Who ſhall my love with equal love regard;
Happy are they, who when they give their heart
Find ſuch as in exchange their own impart.

But there is more in it than this felicity amounts to. For χρηστὸς ἀνὴρ *the good man* is a profitable, uſeful perſon, and that's the band of an effective friendſhip. For I do not think that friendſhips are Metaphyſical nothings, created for contemplation,

temptation, or that Men or Women ſhould ſtare upon each others faces, and make dialogues of news and prettineſſes, and look babies in one anothers eyes. Friendſhip is the allay of our ſorrows, the eaſe of our paſſions, the diſcharge of our oppreſſions, the ſanctuary to our calamities, the counſellor of our doubts, the clarity of our minds, the emiſſion of our thoughts, the exerciſe and improvement of what we meditate: And although I love my friend becauſe he is worthy, yet he is not worthy if he can do no good. I do not ſpeak of accidental hindrances and misfortunes by which the braveſt man may become unable to help his Child; but of the natural and artificial capacities of the man. He only is fit to be choſen for a friend, who can do thoſe offices for which friendſhip is excellent. For (miſtake not) no man can be loved for himſelf; our perfections in this World cannot reach ſo high; it is well if we would love God at that rate, and I very much fear, that if God did us no good, we might admire his Beauties, but we ſhould have but a ſmall proportion of love towards him; and therefore it is, that God

to

to endear *the obedience*, that is, *the love* of his ſervants, ſignifies what benefits he gives us, what great good things he does for us. *I am the Lord God that brought thee out of the land of Egypt*: and *does Job ſerve God for nought?* and *he that comes to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder*: all his other greatneſſes are objects of fear and wonder, it is his goodneſs that makes him lovely: and ſo it is in friendſhips. He only is fit to be choſen for a friend who can give counſel, or defend my cauſe, or guide me right, or relieve my need, or can and will, when I need it, do me good: only this I add: into the heaps of doing good, I will reckon [*loving me*] for it is a pleaſure to be beloved, but when his love ſignifies nothing but kiſſing my cheek, or talking kindly, and can go no further, it is a proſtitution of the bravery of friendſhip to ſpend it upon impertinent people who are (it may be) loads to their families, but can never eaſe my loads: but my friend is a worthy perſon when he can become to me inſtead of God, a guide or a ſupport, an eye, or a hand; a ſtaff, or a rule: There muſt be in friendſhip ſomething

thing to diſtinguiſh it from a Companion, and a Country man, from a School-fellow or a Goſſip, from a Sweet-heart or a Fellow-traveller: Friendſhip may look in at any one of theſe doors, but it ſtays not any where till it come to be the beſt thing in the world: and when we conſider that one man is not better than another, neither towards God nor towards Man, but by doing better and braver things, we ſhall alſo ſee, that that which is moſt beneficent is alſo moſt excellent; and therefore thoſe friendſhips muſt needs be moſt perfect, where the friends can be moſt uſeful. For men cannot be uſeful but by worthineſſes in the ſeveral inſtances: a fool cannot be relyed upon for counſel, nor a vitious perſon for the advantages of vertue, nor a begger for relief, nor a ſtranger for conduct, nor a tatler to keep a ſecret, nor a pittileſs perſon truſted with my complaint, nor a covetous man with my childs fortune, nor a falſe perſon without a witneſs, nor a ſuſpicious perſon with a private deſign; nor him that I fear with the treaſures of my love: But he that is wiſe and vertuous, rich and at hand, cloſe and merciful, free of his money and tenacious of a ſecret,

ſecret, open and ingenuous, true and honeſt, is of himſelf an excellent man; and therefore fit to be loved; and he can do good to me in all capacities where I can need him, and therefore is fit to be a friend. I confeſs we are forced in our friendſhips to abate ſome of theſe ingredients; but full meaſures of friendſhip, would have full meaſures of worthineſs; and according as any defect is in the foundation; in the relation alſo there may be imperfection: and indeed I ſhall not blame the friendſhip ſo it be worthy, though it be not perfect; not only becauſe friendſhip is charity, which cannot be perfect here, but becauſe there is not in the World a perfect cauſe of perfect friendſhip.

If you can ſuſpect that this diſcourſe can ſuppoſe friendſhip to be mercenary, and to be defective in the greateſt worthineſs of it, which is to love our friend for our friends ſake, I ſhall eaſily be able to defend my ſelf; becauſe I ſpeak of the election and reaſons of chooſing friends: after he is choſen do as nobly as you talk, and love as purely as you dream, and let your converſation be as metaphyſical as your

your discourse, and proceed in this method, till you be confuted by experience; yet till then, the case is otherwise when we speak of choosing one to be my friend: He is not my friend till I have chosen him, or loved him; and if any man enquires whom he shall choose or whom he should love, I suppose it ought not to be answered, that we should love him who hath least amability; that we should choose him who hath least reason to be chosen: But if it be answered, he is to be chosen to be my friend who is most worthy in himself, not he that can do most good to me; I say, here is a distinction but no difference; for he is most worthy in himself who can do most good; and if he can love me too, that is, if he will do me all the good he can, that I need, then he is my friend and he deserves it. And it is impossible from a friend to separate a will to do me good: and therefore I do not choose well, if I choose one that hath not power; for if it may consist with the nobleness of friendship to desire that my friend be ready to do me benefit or support, it is not sense to say, it is ignoble to desire he should really do it when I need; and if it were

not

not for pleasure or profit, we might as well be without a friend as have him.

Among all the pleasures and profits, the *sensual pleasure* and the *matter of money* are the lowest and the least; and therefore although they may sometimes be used in friendship, and so not wholly excluded from the consideration of him that is to choose, yet of all things they are to be the least regarded.

Ἐν τοῖς δὲ δεινοῖς, χρημάτων κρεῖττων φίλος.

When fortune frowns upon a Man,
A friend does more than money can.

For there are besides these, many profits and many pleasures; and because these only are sordid, all the other are noble and fair, and the expectations of them no disparagements to the best friendships. For can any wise or good man be angry if I say, I choose this man to be my friend, because he is able to give me counsel, to restrain my wandrings, to comfort me in my sorrows; he is pleasant to me in private,

vate, and useful in publick; he will make my joys double, and divide my grief between himself and me? For what else should I choose; For being a fool, and useless; for a pretty face or a smooth chin? I confess it is possible to be a friend to one that is ignorant, and pitiable, handsome and good for nothing, that eats well, and drinks deep, but he cannot be a friend to me; and I love him with a fondness or a pity, but it cannot be a noble friendship.

οὐκ ἐᾶ πότων καὶ τῆς καθ' ἡμέραν τρυφῆς
Ζητοῦμεν ᾧ πιστεύσωμεν τὰ τοῦ βίου
Πάτερ; οὐ περιττὸν οἷσι τ' ἐξευρηκέναι
Ἀγαθὸν ἕκαστος ἐὰν ἔχῃ φίλου σκίαν·
said *Menander*.

By Wine and mirth and every days delight
We choose our friends, to whom we think we might
Our Souls intrust; but fools are they that lend
Their bosom to the shadow of a friend.

Εἴδωλα

εἴδωλα καὶ μιμήματα φιλίας. *Plutarch* calls ſuch friendſhips, the Idols and Images of friendſhip. True and brave friendſhips are between worthy perſons; and there is in Mankind no degree of worthineſs, but is alſo a degree of uſefulneſs, and by every thing by which a man is excellent, I may be profited: and becauſe thoſe are the braveſt friends which can beſt ſerve the ends of friendſhips, either we muſt ſuppoſe that friendſhips are not the greateſt comforts in the World, or elſe we muſt ſay, he chooſes his friend beſt, that chooſes ſuch a one by whom he can receive the greateſt comforts and aſſiſtances.

3. This being the meaſure of all friendſhips; they all partake of excellency, according as they are fitted to this meaſure: a friend may be counſelled well enough though his friend be not the wiſeſt man in the world, and he may be pleaſed in his ſociety though he be not the beſt natured man in the world; but ſtill it muſt be, that ſomething excellent is, or is apprehended, or elſe it can be no worthy friendſhip; becauſe the choice is imprudent

dent and fooliſh. Chooſe for your friend him that is wiſe and good, and ſecret and juſt, ingenuous and honeſt; and in thoſe things which have a latitude, uſe your own liberty; but in ſuch things which conſiſt in an indiviſible point, make no abatements; That is, you muſt not chooſe him to be your friend that is not honeſt and ſecret, juſt and true to a tittle; but if he be wiſe at all, and uſeful in any degree, and as good as you can have him, you need not be aſhamed to own your friendſhips; though ſometimes you may be aſhamed of ſome imperfections of your friend.

4. But if you yet enquire further, whether fancy may be an ingredient in your choice? I anſwer, that fancy may miniſter to this as to all other actions in which there is a liberty and variety; and we ſhall find that there may be peculiarities and little partialities, a *friendſhip, improperly ſo called*, entring upon accounts of an innocent paſſion and a pleas'd fancy; even our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf loved Saint *John* and *Lazarus* by a ſpecial love, which was ſignified by ſpecial treatments; and

of

of the young man that ſpake well and wiſely to Chriſt, it is affirmed, *Jeſus loved him*: that is, he fancied the man, and his ſoul had a certain cognation and ſimilitude of temper and inclination. For in all things where there is a latitude, every faculty will endeavour to be pleaſed, and ſometimes the meaneſt perſons in a houſe have a feſtival; even ſympathies and natural inclinations to ſome perſons, and a conformity of humours, and proportionable loves, and the beauty of the face, and a witty anſwer may firſt ſtrike the flint and kindle a ſpark, which if it falls upon tender and compliant natures may grow into a flame; but this will never be maintained at the rate of friendſhip, unleſs it be fed by pure materials, by *worthineſſes* which *are the food of friendſhip*: where theſe are not, Men and Women may be pleaſed with one anothers company, and lye under the ſame roof, and make themſelves companions of equal proſperities, and humour their friend; but if you call this friendſhip, you give a ſacred name to humour or fancy, for there is a Platonick friendſhip as well as a Platonick love; but they being but the Images of more

noble bodies are but like tinsel dressings, which will shew bravely by candle-light, and do excellently in a mask, but are not fit for conversation, and the material entercourses of our life. These are the prettinesses of prosperity and good-natured wit; but when we speak of friendship, which is the best thing in the World (for it is love and beneficence; it is charity that is fitted for society) we cannot suppose a brave pile should be built up with nothing; and they that build Castles in the air, and look upon friendship, as upon a fine Romance, a thing that pleases the fancy, but is good for nothing else, will do well when they are asleep, or when they are come to *Elysium*; and for ought I know in the mean time may be as much in love with *Mandana* in the *Grand Cyrus*, as with the *Infanta of Spain*, or any of the most perfect beauties and real excellencies of the world: and by dreaming of perfect and abstracted friendships, make them so immaterial that they perish in the handling and become good for nothing.

But I know not whither I was going; I did only mean to say that because friend-

ship

ſhip is that by which the world is moſt bleſſed and receives moſt good, it ought to be choſen amongſt the worthieſt perſons, that is, amongſt thoſe that can do greateſt benefit to each other; and though in equal worthineſs I may chuſe by my eye, or ear, that is, into the conſideration of the eſſential I may take in alſo the accidental and extrinſick worthineſſes; yet I ought to give every one their juſt value; when the internal beauties are equal, theſe ſhall help to weigh down the ſcale, and I will love a worthy friend that can delight me as well as profit me, rather than him who cannot delight me at all, and profit me *no more*; but yet I will not weigh the gayeſt flowers, or the wings of butterflies againſt wheat; but when I am to chuſe wheat, I may take that which looks the brighteſt: I had rather ſee Thyme and Roſes, Marjoram and July-flowers that are fair and ſweet and medicinal, than the prettieſt Tulips that are good for nothing: And my Sheep and Kine are better ſervants than Race-horſes and Gray-hounds: And I ſhall rather furniſh my Study with *Plutarch* and *Cicero*, with *Livy* and *Polybius*, than with *Caſſandra* and *Ibrahim Baſſa*;

and if I do give an hour to these for divertisement or pleasure, yet I will dwell with them that can instruct me, and make me wise and eloquent, severe and useful to my self and others. I end this with the saying of *Lelius* in *Cicero*: *Amicitia non debet consequi utilitatem, sed amicitiam utilitas.* When I chuse my friend, I will not stay till I have received a kindness; but I will chuse such an one that can do me many if I need them: But I mean such kindnesses which make me wiser, and which make me better; that is, I will when I chuse my friend, chuse him that is the bravest, the worthiest and the most excellent person: and then your first Question is soon answered; to love such a person and to contract such friendships is just so authorized by the principles of Christianity, as it is warranted to love wisdom and vertue, goodness and beneficence, and all the impresses of God upon the spirits of brave men.

2. The next inquiry is *how far it may extend?* That is, by what expressions it may be signified? I find that *David* and *Jonathan* loved at a strange rate; they were

were both good men; though it happened that *Jonathan* was on the obliging side; but here the expressions were; *Jonathan* watched for *Davids* good; told him of his danger, and helped him to escape; took part with *Davids* innocence against his Fathers malice and injustice; and beyond all this, did it to his own prejudice; and they two stood like two feet supporting one body; though *Jonathan* knew that *David* would prove like the foot of a Wrestler, and would supplant him, not by any unworthy or unfriendly action, but it was from God; and he gave him his hand to set him upon his own Throne.

We find his parallels in the Gentile stories: young *Athenodorus* having divided the estate with his Brother *Xenon*; divided it again when *Xenon* had spent his own share; and *Lucullus* would not take the Consulship till his younger brother had first enjoyed it for a year; but *Pollux* divided with *Castor* his immortality; and you know who offer'd himself to death being pledg for his friend; and his friend by performing his word rescued him as bravely: and when we find in Scripture that

for a good man some will even dare to die; and that *Aquila* and *Priscilla* laid their necks down for S. *Paul*; and the *Galatians* would have given him their very eyes, that is, every thing that was most dear to them, and some others were near unto death for his sake; and that it is a precept of Christian charity, to lay down our lives for our brethren, that is, those who were combined in a cause of Religion, who were united with the same hopes, and imparted to each other ready assistances, and grew dear by common sufferings, we need enquire no further for the expressions of friendships: *Greater love than this hath no man, than that he lay down his life for his friends*; and this we are oblig'd to do in some Cases for all Christians; and therefore we may do it for those who are to us in this present and imperfect state of things, that which all the good Men and Women in the World shall be in Heaven, that is, in the state of perfect friendships. This is the biggest; but then it includes and can suppose all the rest; and if this may be done for all, and in some cases must for any one of the multitude, we need not scruple whether we may do it for those

who

who are better than a multitude. But as for the thing it self, it is not easily and lightly to be done; and a Man must not die for humour, nor expend so great a Jewel for a trifle: μόλις ἀναπνύσαμεν εἰδότες ἐπ' οὐδενὶ λυσιτελεῖ παραπόλωμα γενησόμενοι: said *Philo*; we will hardly die when it is for nothing, when no good, no worthy end is served, and become a Sacrifice to redeem a foot boy. But we may not give our life to redeem another: unless 1. The party for whom we die be a worthy and an useful person; better for the publick, or better for Religion, and more useful to others than my self. Thus *Ribischius* the German died bravely when he became a Sacrifice for his Master, *Maurice* Duke of *Saxony*; Covering his Masters body with his own, that he might escape the fury of the Turkish Souldiers. *Succurram perituro, sed ut ipse non peream, nisi si futurus ero magni hominis, aut magnæ rei merces*, said *Seneca*. I will help a dying person if I can; but I will not die my self for him, unless by my death I save a brave man, or become the price of a great thing; that is, I will die for a Prince, for the republick, or to save an Army, as

David expos'd himself to combat with the Philistin for the redemption of the host of *Israel*: and in this sense, that is true; *Praestat ut pereat unus, quam Unitas*, better that *one* perish than a *multitude*. 2. A man dies bravely when he gives his temporal life to save the soul of any single person in the Christian world. It is a worthy exchange, and the glorification of that love by which Christ gave his life for every soul. Thus he that reproves an erring Prince wisely and necessarily, he that affirms a fundamental truth, or stands up for the glory of the Divine attributes, though he die for it, becomes a worthy sacrifice. 3. These are duty, but it may be heroick and full of Christian bravery, to give my life to rescue a noble and a brave friend; though I my self be as worthy a man as he; because the preference of him is an act of humility in me; and of friendship towards him; *Humility* and *Charity* making a pious difference, where *art* and *nature* have made all equal.

Some have fancied other measures of treating our friends. One sort of men say that we are to expect that our friends

should

should value us as we value our selves: which if it were to be admitted, will require that we make no friendship with a proud man; and so far indeed were well; but then this proportion does exclude some humble men who are most to be valued, and the rather because they undervalue themselves.

Others say that a friend is to value his friend as much as his friend values him; but neither is this well or safe, wise or sufficient; for it makes friendship a meer bargain, and is something like the Country weddings in some places where I have been; where the bridegroom and the bride must meet in the half way, and if they fail a step, they retire and break the match: It is not good to make a reckoning in friendship; that's merchandise, or it may be gratitude, but not noble friendship; in which each part strives to out-do the other in significations of an excellent love: And *amongst true friends there is no fear of losing any thing.*

But that which amongst the old Philosophers comes neareſt to the right, is that we

we love our friends as we love our selves. If they had meant it as our Blessed Saviour did, of that general friendship by which we are to love all Mankind, it had been perfect and well; or if they had meant it of the inward affection, or of outward justice; but because they meant it of the most excellent friendships, and of the outward significations of it, it cannot be sufficient: for a friend may and must sometimes do more for his friend than he would do for himself. Some men will perish before they will beg or petition for themselves to some certain persons; but they account it noble to do it for their friend, and they will want rather than their friend shall want; and they will be more earnest in praise or dispraise respectively for their friend than for themselves. And indeed I account *that* one of the greatest demonstrations of real friendship, that a friend can really endeavour to have his friend advanced in honour, in reputation, in the opinion of wit or learning before himself.

Martial. l. 8. ep. 18. *Aurum & opes, & rura frequens donabit amicus:*
Qui velit ingenio cedere rarus erit.

Sed

Sed tibi tantus ineſt veteris reſpectus amici,
Carior ut mea ſit quam tua fama tibi.

Lands, gold and trifles many give or lend;
But he that ſtoops in fame is a rare friend;
In friendſhips orb thou art the brighteſt ſtar,
Before thy fame mine thou preferreſt far.

But then be pleaſed to think that therefore I ſo highly value this ſignification of friendſhip, becauſe I ſo highly value humility. Humility and Charity are the two greateſt graces in the World; and theſe are the greateſt ingredients which conſtitute friendſhip and expreſs it.

But there needs no other meaſures of friendſhip, but that it may be as great as you can expreſs it; beyond death it cannot go, to death it may, when the cauſe is reaſonable and juſt, charitable and religious: and yet if there be any thing greater than to ſuffer death (and pain and ſhame to ſome are more inſufferable) a true and noble

noble friendſhip ſhrinks not at the greateſt trials.

And yet there is a limit even to friendſhip. It muſt be as great as our friend fairly needs in all things where we are not tied up by a former duty, to God, to our ſelves, or ſome pre-obliging relative. When *Pollux* heard ſome body whiſper a reproach againſt his Brother *Caſtor*, he killed the ſlanderer with his fiſt: that was a zeal which his friendſhip could not warrant. *Nulla eſt excuſatio ſi amici cauſâ peccaveris*, ſaid *Cicero*. No friendſhip can excuſe a ſin: And this the braver *Romans* inſtanced in the matter of duty to their Country. It is not lawful to fight on our friends part againſt our Prince or Country; and therefore when *Caius Bloſius* of *Cuma* in the ſedition of *Gracchus* appeared againſt his Country, when he was taken he anſwered, That he loved *Tiberius Gracchus* ſo dearly, that he thought fit to follow him whitherſoever he led; and begg'd pardon upon that account. They who were his Judges were ſo noble, that though they knew it no fair excuſe: yet for the honour of friendſhip they

they did not directly reject his motion: but put him to death, becauſe he did not follow, but led on *Gracchus*, and brought his friend into the ſnare: For ſo they preſerved the honours of friendſhip on either hand, by neither ſuffering it to be ſullied by a foul excuſe, nor yet rejected in any fair pretence. A man may not be perjured for his friend. I remember to have read in the Hiſtory of the Low-countries, that *Grimſton* and *Redhead*, when *Bergen-apzoom* was beſieged by the Duke of *Parma*, acted for the intereſt of the Queen of *Englands* Forces a notable deſign; but being ſuſpected and put for their acquittance to take the Sacrament of the Altar, they diſſembled their perſons, and their intereſt, their deſign and their religion, and did for the Queens ſervice (as one wittily wrote to her) give not only their bodies but their ſouls, and ſo deſerved a reward greater than ſhe could pay them: I cannot ſay this is a thing greater than a friendſhip can require, for it is not great at all, but a great villany, which hath no name, and no order in worthy entercourſes; and no obligation to a friend can reach as high as our duty to God: And he that does

a base thing in zeal for his friend, burns the golden thred that ties their hearts together; it is a *conspiracy*, but no longer *friendship*. And when *Cato* lent his Wife to *Hortensius*, and *Socrates* lent his to a merry Greek, they could not amongst wise persons obtain so much as the fame of being worthy friends, neither could those great Names legitimate an unworthy action under the most plausible title.

It is certain that amongst friends their estates are common; that is, by whatsoever I can rescue my friend from calamity, I am to serve him, or not to call him friend; there is a great latitude in this, and it is to be restrained by no prudence, but when there is on the other side a great necessity neither vicious nor avoidable: A man may chuse whether he will or no; and he does not sin in not doing it, unless he have bound himself to it: *But certainly friendship is the greatest band in the world*, and if he have professed a great friendship, he hath a very great obligation to do that and more; and he can no ways be disobliged but by the care of his Natural relations.

I ſaid, [*Friendſhip is the greateſt bond in the world,*] and I had reaſon for it, for it is all the bands that this world hath; and there is no ſociety, and there is no relation that is worthy, but it is made ſo by the communications of friendſhip, and by partaking ſome of its excellencies. For friendſhip is a tranſcendent, and ſignifies as much as *Unity* can mean, and every conſent, and every pleaſure, and every benefit, and every ſociety is the Mother or the Daughter of friendſhip. Some friendſhips are made by *nature*, ſome by *contract*, ſome by *intereſt*, and ſome by *ſouls*. And in proportion to theſe ways of Uniting, ſo the friendſhips are greater or leſs, vertuous or natural, profitable or holy, or all this together. Nature makes excellent friendſhips, of which we obſerve ſomething in ſocial parts; growing better in each others neighbourhood than where they ſtand ſingly: And in animals it is more notorious, whoſe friendſhips extend ſo far as to herd and dwell together, to play, and feed, to defend and fight for one another, and to cry in abſence, and to rejoyce in one anothers preſence. But theſe friend-

friendships have other names less noble, they are *sympathy*, or they are *instinct*. But if to this natural friendship there be reason superadded, something will come in upon the stock of reason which will ennoble it; but because no Rivers can rise higher than Fountains, reason shall draw out all the dispositions which are in Nature and establish them into friendships, but they cannot surmount the communications of Nature; Nature can make no friendships greater than her own excellencies. Nature is the way of contracting necessary friendships: that is, by nature such friendships are contracted without which we cannot live, and be educated, or be well, or be at all. In this scene, that of Parents and Children is the greatest, which indeed is begun in nature, but is actuated by society and mutual endearments. For Parents love their Children because they love themselves, Children being but like emissions of water, symbolical, or indeed the same with the fountain; and they in their posterity see the images and instruments of a civil immortality; but if Parents and Children do not live together, we see their friendships and

their

their loves are much abated, and ſupported only by fame and duty, by cuſtoms and religion, which to nature are but artificial pillars, and make this friendſhip to be complicated, and to paſs from its own kind to another. That of Children to their Parents is not properly friendſhip, but gratitude and intereſt, and religion, and whatever can ſupervene of the nature of friendſhip comes in upon another account; upon ſociety and worthineſs and choice.

This relation on either hand makes great Dearneſſes: But it hath ſpecial and proper ſignifications of it, and there is a ſpecial duty incumbent on each other reſpectively. This friendſhip and ſocial relation is not equal, and there is too much authority on one ſide, and too much fear on the other to make equal friendſhips; and therefore although this is one of the kinds of friendſhip, that is of a ſocial and relative love and converſation, yet in the more proper uſe of the word; [Friendſhip] does do ſome things which Father and Son do not; I inſtance in the free and open communicating counſels, and the even-

evenness and pleasantness of conversation; and consequently the significations of the paternal and filial love as they are divers in themselves and unequal, and therefore another kind of friendship than we mean in our inquiry; so they are such a duty which no other friendship can annul: because their mutual duty is bound upon them by religion long before any other friendships can be contracted; and therefore having first possession must abide for ever. The duty and love to Parents must not yield to religion, much less to any new friendships: and our Parents are to be preferred before the Corban; and are at no hand to be laid aside but when they engage against God: That is, in the rights which this relation and kind of friendship challenges as its propriety, it is supreme and cannot give place to any other friendships; till the Father gives his right away, and God or the Laws consent to it; as in the case of marriage, emancipation, and adoption to another family: in which cases though love and gratitude are still obliging, yet the societies and duties of relation are very much altered, which in the proper and best friendships can never be

at

at all. But then this alſo is true: that the ſocial relations of Parents and Children not having in them all the capacities of a proper friendſhip, cannot challenge all the ſignifications of it: that is, it is no prejudice to the duty I owe there, to pay all the dearneſſes which are due here, and to friends there are ſome things due which the other cannot challenge: I mean, *my ſecret*, and *my equal converſation*, and the pleaſures and intereſts of theſe, and the conſequents of all.

Next to this is the ſociety and dearneſs of Brothers and Siſters: which uſually is very great amongſt worthy perſons; but if it be conſidered what it is in it ſelf, it is but very little; there is very often a likeneſs of natural temper, and there is a ſocial life under the ſame roof, and they are commanded to love one another, and they are equals in many inſtances, and are endeared by converſation when it is merry and pleaſant, innocent and ſimple, without art and without deſign. But Brothers paſs not into noble friendſhips upon the ſtock of that relation: they have fair diſpoſitions and advantages, and are more

eaſie

eaſie and ready to ferment into the greateſt dearneſſes, if all things elſe be anſwerable. Nature diſpoſes them well towards it, but in this inquiry if we ask what duty is paſſed upon a Brother to a Brother even for being ſo? I anſwer, that religion and our parents and God and the laws appoint what meaſures they pleaſe; but nature paſſes but very little, and friendſhip leſs; and this we ſee apparently in thoſe Brothers who live aſunder, and contract new relations, and dwell in other ſocieties: There is no love, no friendſhip without the entercourſe of converſation: Friendſhips indeed may laſt longer than our abode together, but they were firſt contracted by it, and eſtabliſhed by pleaſure and benefit, and unleſs it be the beſt kind of friendſhip (which that of Brothers in that meer capacity is not) it dies when it wants the proper nutriment and ſupport: and to this purpoſe is that which was ſpoken by *Solomon*: [*better is a neighbour that is near, than a Brother that is far off*:] that is, although ordinarily, Brothers are firſt poſſeſſed of the entries and fancies of friendſhip, becauſe they are of the firſt ſocieties and

Prov. 27.10.

converſ-

converſations, yet when that ceaſes and the Brother goes away, ſo that he does no advantage, no benefit of entercourſe; the neighbour that dwells by me, with whom if I converſe at all, either he is my enemy and does, and receives evil; or if we converſe in worthineſſes and benefit and pleaſant communications, he is better in the laws and meaſures of friendſhip than my diſtant Brother. And it is obſervable that [*Brother*] is indeed a word of friendſhip and charity and of mutual endearment, and ſo is a title of the braveſt ſociety; yet in all the Scripture there are no precepts given of any duty and comport which Brothers, that is, the deſcendents of the ſame parents are to have one towards another in that capacity, and it is not becauſe their nearneſs is ſuch that they need none: For Parents and children are nearer, and yet need tables of duty to be deſcribed; and for Brothers, certainly they need it infinitely if there be any peculiar duty; *Cain* and *Abel* are the great probation of that, and you know who ſaid,

Fratrum quoque gratia rara eſt:

It

It is not often you shall see
Two Brothers live in amity.

But the Scripture which often describes the duty of Parents and Children, never describes the duty of Brothers; except where by *Brethren* are meant all that part of mankind who are tied to us by any vicinity and indearment of religion or country, of profession and family, of contract or society, of love and the noblest friendships; the meaning is, that though fraternity alone be the endearment of some degrees of friendship, without choice and without excellency; yet the relation it self is not friendship, and does not naturally infer it, and that which is procured by it, is but limited and little; and though it may pass into it, as other conversations may, yet the friendship is accidental to it; and enters upon other accounts, as it does between strangers; with this only difference that Brotherhood does oftentimes assist the valuation of those excellencies for which we entertain our friendships. Fraternity is the opportunity and preliminary disposition to friendship, and no more.

For

For if my Brother be a fool or a vitious perſon, the love to which nature and our firſt converſation diſpoſes me, does not end in friendſhip, but in pity and fair proviſions, and aſſiſtances; which is a demonſtration that Brotherhood is but the inclination and addreſs to friendſhip: and though I will love a worthy Brother more than a worthy ſtranger; if the worthineſs be equal, becauſe the relation is ſomething, and being put into the ſcales againſt an equal worthineſs muſt needs turn the ballance, as every grain will do in an even weight; yet when the relation is all the worthineſs that is pretended, it cannot ſtand in competition with a friend: for though a *friend-Brother* is better than a *friend-ſtranger*, where the friend is equal, but the Brother is not: yet a Brother is not better than a friend; but as *Solomons* expreſſion is [there is a friend that is better than a Brother,] and to be born of the ſame parents is ſo accidental and extrinſick to a mans pleaſure or worthineſs, or ſpiritual advantages, that though it be very pleaſing and uſeful that a Brother ſhould be a friend, yet it is no great addition to a friend that he alſo is a Brother; there is

ſomething in it, but not much. But in ſhort, the caſe is thus. The firſt beginnings of friendſhip ſerve the neceſſities; but choice and worthineſs are the excellencies of its endearment and its bravery; and between a Brother that is no friend, and a friend that is no Brother, there is the ſame difference as between the diſpoſition, and the act or habit: a Brother if he be worthy is the readieſt and the neareſt to be a friend, but till he be ſo, he is but the twi-light of the day, and but the bloſſome to the faireſt fruit of Paradiſe. A Brother does not always make a friend, but a friend ever makes a Brother and more: And although nature ſometimes finds the tree, yet friendſhip engraves the Image; the firſt relation places him in the Garden, but friendſhip ſets it in the Temple, and then only it is venerable and ſacred: and ſo is Brotherhood when it hath the ſoul of friendſhip.

So that if it be asked which are moſt to be valued, Brothers or friends; the anſwer is very eaſie; Brotherhood is or may be one of the kinds of friendſhip, and from thence only hath its value, and there-

therefore if it be compared with a greater friendſhip muſt give place: But then it is not to be asked which is to be preferred, a *Brother* or a *Friend*, but which is the better friend; *Memnon* or my *Brother*? For if my Brother ſays I ought to love him beſt, then he ought to love me beſt; * if he does, then there is a great friendſhip, and he poſſibly is to be preferred; if he can be that friend which he pretends to be, that is, if he be equally worthy: but if he ſays, I muſt love him only becauſe he is my Brother, whether he loves me or no, he is ridiculous; and it will be a ſtrange relation which hath no correſpondent: but ſuppoſe it, and add this alſo, that I am equally his Brother as he is mine, and then he alſo muſt love me whether I love him or no; and if he does not, he ſays, I muſt love him though he be my Enemy; and ſo I muſt; but I muſt not love my Enemy though he be my Brother more then I love my Friend; and at laſt if he does love me for being his Brother, I confeſs that this love deſerves love again; but

* *Ut præſtem Pyladen, aliquis mihi præſtet Oreſten. Hoc non ſit verbis, Marce, ut ameris, ama.* Mar. l. 6. ep. 11.

then I consider, that he loves me upon an incompetent reason: for he that loves me only because I am his Brother, loves me for that which is no worthiness, and I must love him as much as that comes to, and for as little reason; unless this be added, that he loves me first: but whether choice and union of souls, and worthiness of manners, and greatness of understanding, and usefulness of conversation, and the benefits of Counsel, and all those endearments which make our lives pleasant and our persons Dear, are not better and greater reasons of love and Dearness than to be born of the same flesh, I think amongst wise persons needs no great inquiry. For fraternity is but a Cognation of bodies, but friendship is an Union of souls which are confederated by more noble ligatures. My Brother, if he be no more, shall have my hand to help him, but unless he be my friend too, he cannot challenge my heart: and if his being my friend be the greater nearness, then *friend* is more than *Brother*, and I suppose no man doubts but that *David* lov'd *Jonathan* far more than he lov'd his Brother *Eliab*.

One

One inquiry more there may be in this affair, and that is, whether a friend may be more than a Husband or Wife; To which I answer, that it can never be reasonable or just, prudent or lawful: but the reason is, because Marriage is the Queen of friendships, in which there is a communication of all that can be communicated by friendship: and it being made sacred by vows and love, by bodies and souls, by interest and custome, by religion and by laws, by common Counsels, and common fortunes; it is the principal in the kind of friendship, and the measure of all the rest: And there is no abatement to this consideration, but that there may be some allay in this as in other lesser friendships by the incapacity of the persons: if I have not chosen my friend wisely or fortunately, he cannot be the correlative in the best Union; but then the friend lives as the soul does after death, it is in the state of separation, in which the soul strangely loves the body and longs to be reunited, but the body is an useless trunk and can do no ministeries to the soul; which therefore prays to have the body

reformed and restored and made a brave and a fit companion: so must these best friends, when one is useless or unapt to the braveries of the princely friendship, they must love ever, and pray ever, and long till the other be perfected and made fit; in this case there wants only the body, but the soul is still a relative and must be so for ever.

Attend here

A Husband and a Wife are the best friends, but they cannot always signifie all that to each other which their friendships would; as the Sun shines not upon a Valley which sends up a thick vapour to cover his face; and though his beams are eternal, yet the emission is intercepted by the intervening cloud. But however all friendships are but parts of this; a man must leave Father and Mother and cleave to his Wife, that is [*the dearest thing in Nature is not comparable to the dearest thing of friendship:*] and I think this is argument sufficient to prove friendship to be the greatest band in the world. Add to this, that other friendships are parts of this, they are marriages too, less indeed than the other, because they cannot, must not

not be all that endearment which the other is; yet that being the principal, is the meaſure of the reſt, and are all to be honoured by like dignities, and meaſured by the ſame rules, and conducted by their portion of the ſame Laws: But as friendſhips are *Marriages* of the ſoul, and of fortunes and intereſts, and counſels; ſo they are *brotherhoods* too; and I often think of the excellencies of friendſhips in the words of *David*, who certainly was the beſt friend in the World. [*Ecce quam bonum & quam jucundum fratres habitare in unum:*] It is good and it is pleaſant that Brethren ſhould live like friends, that is, they who are any ways relative, and who are any ways ſocial and confederate ſhould alſo dwell in Unity and loving ſociety, for that is the meaning of the word [Brother] in Scripture [It was my Brother *Jonathan*] ſaid *David*; ſuch Brothers contracting ſuch friendſhips are the beauties of ſociety, and the pleaſure of life, and the feſtivity of minds: and whatſoever can be ſpoken of love, which is God's eldeſt daughter, can be ſaid of vertuous friendſhips; and though *Carneades* made an eloquent Oration at *Rome* againſt

justice, and yet never saw a Panegyrick of malice, or ever read that any man was witty against friendship. Indeed it is probable that some men, finding themselves by the peculiarities of friendship excluded from the participation of those beauties of society which enamel and adorn the wise and the vertuous, might suppose themselves to have reason to speak the evil words of envy and detraction; I wonder not that all those unhappy souls which shall find heaven gates shut against them, will think they have reason to murmur and blaspheme: The similitude is apt enough, for that is the region of friendship, and love is the light of that glorious Countrey, but so bright that it needs no Sun: Here we have fine and bright rayes of that Celestial flame, and though to all Mankind the light of it is in some measure to be extended, like the treasures of light dwelling in the South, yet a little do illustrate and beautifie the North, yet some live under the line, and the beams of friendship in that position are imminent and perpendicular.

I know but one thing more in which the

the Communications of friendſhip can be reſtrained; and that is, in Friends and Enemies: *Amicus amici, amicus meus non eſt:* My friends friend is not always my friend; nor his enemy mine; for if my friend quarrel with a third perſon with whom he hath had no friendſhips, upon the account of intereſt; if that third perſon be my friend, the nobleneſs of our friendſhips deſpiſes ſuch a quarrel; and what may be reaſonable in him, would be ignoble in me; ſometimes it may be otherwiſe, and friends may marry one anothers loves and hatreds, but it is by chance if it can be juſt, and therefore *becauſe it is not always right it cannot be ever neceſſary.*

In all things elſe, let friendſhips be as high and expreſſive till they become an Union, or that friends like the Molionidæ be ſo the ſame that the flames of their dead bodies make but one Pyramis; no charity can be reproved; and ſuch friendſhips which are more than ſhadows, are nothing elſe but the rayes of that glorious grace drawn into one centre, and made more active by the Union; and the pro-

per ſignifications are well repreſented in the old Hieroglyphick, by which the ancients depicted friendſhip: "In the beauties and ſtrength of a young man, bare-headed, rudely clothed, to ſignifie its activity, and laſtingneſs, readineſs of action, and aptneſſes to do ſervice; Upon the fringes of his garment was written *Mors & vita*, as ſignifying that *in life and death* the friendſhip was the ſame; on the forehead was written *Summer and Winter*, that is, proſperous and adverſe accidents and ſtates of life; the left arm and ſhoulder was bare and naked down to the heart to which the finger pointed, and there was written *longè & propè*: by all which we know that friendſhip does good far and near: in Summer and Winter, in life and death, and knows no difference of ſtate or accident but by the variety of her ſervices: and therefore ask no more to what we can be obliged by friendſhip; for it is every thing that can be *honeſt* and *prudent*, *uſeful* and *neceſſary*.

For this is all the allay of this Univerſality, we may do any thing or ſuffer any thing,

thing, that is *wise* or *necessary*, or *greatly beneficial* to my friend, and that *in any thing*, in which I am *perfect master* of my *person* and *fortunes*. But I would not in bravery visit my friend when he is sick of the plague, unless I can do him good equal at least to my danger, but I will procure him Physicians and prayers, all the assistances that he can receive, and that he can desire, if they be in my power: and when he is dead, I will not run into his grave and be stifled with his earth; but I will mourn for him, and perform his will, and take care of his relatives, and do for him as if he were alive, and I think that is the meaning of that hard saying of a Greek Poet.

Ἄνθρωπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἀπόπροθεν ὦμεν ἑταῖροι·
Πλὴν τούτου παντὸς χρήματος ἐστὶ κόρος.

To me though distant let thy friendship fly,
Though men be mortal, friendships must not die,
Of all things else there's great satiety.

Of

Of such immortal abstracted pure friendships indeed there is no great plenty, and to see brothers hate each other, is not so rare as to see them love at this rate. *The dead and the absent have but few friends*, say the Spaniards; but they who are the same to their friend ἀπόντι παρόντες, when he is in another Countrey, or in another World, these are they who are fit to preserve the sacred fire for eternal sacrifices, and to perpetuate the memory of those exemplar friendships of the best men which have filled the World with history and wonder: for in no other sense but this, can it be true; that friendships are pure loves, regarding to do good more than to receive it: He that is a friend after death, hopes not for a recompense from his friend, and makes no bargain either for fame or love; but is rewarded with the conscience and satisfaction of doing bravely: but then this is demonstration that they choose Friends best who take persons so worthy that can and will do so: This is the profit and usefulness of friendship; and he that contracts such a noble Union, must take care that his friend be such who can

can and will; but hopes that himself shall be first used, and put to act it: I will not have such a friendship that is good for nothing, but I hope that I shall be on the giving and assisting part; and yet if both the friends be so noble, and hope and strive to do the benefit, I cannot well say which ought to yield; and whether that friendship were braver that could be content to be unprosperous so his friend might have the glory of assisting him; or that which desires to give assistances in the greatest measures of friendship: but he that chooses a worthy friend that himself in the days of sorrow and need might receive the advantage, hath no excuse, no pardon, unless himself be as certain to do assistances when evil fortune shall require them. The sum of this answer to this enquiry I give you in a pair of Greek verses.

ἴσον θεῷ σε τὸς φίλυς τιμᾶν δέλε·
ἐν τοῖς κακοῖς δὲ τὸς φίλυς ὠφελεῖν.

Friends are to friends as lesser Gods, while they
Honour and service to each other pay.

But

But when a dark cloud comes, grudge not to lend
Thy head, thy heart, thy fortune to thy friend.

3. The last inquiry is, *how friendships are to be conducted?* That is, what are *the duties in presence and in absence; whether the friend may not desire to enjoy his friend as well as his friendship?* The answer to which in a great measure depends upon what I have said already: and if friendship be a charity in society, and is not for contemplation and noise, but for material comforts and noble treatments and usages, this is no peradventure, but that if I buy land, I may eat the fruits, and if I take a house I may dwell in it; and if I love a worthy person, I may please my self in his society: and in this there is no exception, unless the friendship be between persons of a different sex: for then not only the interest of their religion, and the care of their honour, but the worthiness of their friendship requires that their entercourse be prudent and free from suspicion and reproach; and if a friend is obliged to bear a calamity, so he secure the honour

of

of his friend, it will concern him to conduct his entercourſe in the lines of a vertuous prudence, ſo that he ſhall rather loſe much of *his own comfort*, than ſhe any thing of *her honour*; and in this caſe the noiſes of people are ſo to be regarded, that next to innocence they are the principal. But when by caution and prudence and ſevere conduct, a friend hath done all that he or ſhe can to ſecure fame and honourable reports; after this, their noiſes are to be deſpiſed; they muſt not fright us from our friendſhips, nor from her faireſt entercourſes; *I may lawfully pluck the cluſters from my own Vine, though he that walks by, calls me thief.*

But by the way (Madam) you may ſee how much I differ from the moroſity of thoſe Cynicks who would not admit your ſex into the communities of a noble friendſhip. I believe ſome Wives have been the beſt friends in the World; and few ſtories can out-do the nobleneſs and piety of that Lady that ſuck'd the poyſonous, purulent matter from the wound of our brave Prince in the holy Land, when an Aſſaſine had pierc'd him with a venom'd arrow;

arrow; and if it be told that Women cannot retain counsel, and therefore can be no brave friends; I can best confute them by the story of *Porcia*, who being fearful of the weakness of her sex, stabb'd her self into the thigh to try how she could bear pain; and finding her self constant enough to that sufferance, gently chid her *Brutus* for not daring to trust her, since now she perceived that no torment could wrest that secret from her, which she hoped might be intrusted to her. If there were not more things to be said for your satisfaction, I could have made it disputable whether have been more illustrious in their friendships Men or Women? I cannot say that Women are capable of all those excellencies by which Men can oblige the World; and therefore a female friend in some cases is not so good a counsellor as a wise man, and cannot so well defend my honour; nor dispose of reliefs and assistances if she be under the power of another: but a woman can love as passionately, and converse as pleasantly, and retain a secret as faithfully, and be useful in her proper ministeries; and she can die for her friend as well as the bravest *Roman* Knight;

Knight; and we find that ſome perſons have engag'd themſelves as far as death upon a leſs intereſt than all this amounts to: ſuch were the ἰυχωλιμαῖοι, as the Greeks call them, the Devoti of a Prince or General, the Aſſaſines amongſt the *Saracens*, the Σαλιδῖνοι amongſt the old *Galatians*: they did as much as a friend could do; and if the greateſt ſervices of a friend can be paid for by an ignoble price, we cannot grudge to vertuous and brave women that they be partners in a noble friendſhip, ſince their converſation and returns can add ſo many moments to the felicity of our lives: and therefore, though a Knife cannot enter as far as a Sword, yet a Knife may be more uſeful to ſome purpoſes; and in every thing, except it be againſt an enemy. A man is the beſt friend in trouble, but a woman may be equal to him in the days of joy: a woman can as well increaſe our comforts, but cannot ſo well leſſen our ſorrows: and therefore we do not carry women with us when we go to fight; but in peaceful Cities and times, vertuous women are the beauties of ſociety and the prettineſſes of friendſhip. And when we conſider that few perſons in the world

world have all those excellencies by which friendship can be useful and illustrious, we may as well allow women as men to be friends; since *they* can have all that which can be necessary and essential to friendships, and *these* cannot have all by which friendships can be accidentally improved; in all some abatements will be made; and we shall do too much honour to women if we reject them from friendships because they are not perfect: for if to friendships we admit imperfect men, because no man is perfect: he that rejects women does find fault with them because they are not more perfect than men, which either does secretly affirm that they ought and can be perfect, or else it openly accuses men of injustice and partiality.

I hope you will pardon me that I am a little gone from my undertaking, I went aside to wait upon the women and to do countenance to their tender vertues: I am now return'd, and, if I were to do the office of a guide to uninstructed friends, would add the particulars following: Madam, you need not read them now, but when any friends come to be taught by your

your precept and example how to converſe in the nobleſt conjurations, you may put theſe into better words and tell them,

1. That the firſt law of friendſhip is, they muſt neither ask of their friend what is Undecent; nor grant it if themſelves be askt. For it is no good office to make my friend more vicious or more a fool; I will reſtrain his folly, but not nurſe it; I will not make my groom the officer of my luſt and vanity. There are Villains who ſell their ſouls for bread, that offer ſin and vanity at a price: I ſhould be unwilling my friend ſhould know I am vicious; but if he could be brought to miniſter to it, he is not worthy to be my friend: and if I could offer it to him, I do not deſerve to claſp hands with a vertuous perſon.

2. Let no Man chuſe him for his friend whom it ſhall be poſſible for him ever after to hate, for though the *ſociety* may juſtly be interrupted, yet *love* is an immortal thing, and I will never deſpiſe him whom I could once think worthy of my love. A friend that proves not good is rather to be ſuffered, than any enmities be enter-

entertained: and there are some outer offices of friendship and little drudgeries in which the less worthy are to be imployed, and it is better that he be below stairs than quite thrown out of doors.

3. There are two things which a friend can never pardon, a treacherous blow and the revealing of a secret, because these are against the Nature of friendship; they are the adulteries of it, and dissolve the Union; and in the matters of friendship which is the marriage of souls; these are the proper causes of divorce: and therefore I shall add this only, that *secrecy* is the *chastity of friendship*, and the publication of it is a prostitution and direct debauchery; but a secret, treacherous wound is a perfect and unpardonable Apostasie. I remember a pretty apologue that *Bromiard* tells, A Fowler in a sharp frosty morning having taken many little birds for which he had long watched, began to take up his Nets; and nipping the birds on the head laid them down. A young Thrush espying the tears trickling down his cheeks by reason of the extreme cold, said to her Mother, that certainly the man was very merciful

tiful and compaſſionate that wept ſo bitterly over the calamity of the poor Birds. But her Mother told her more wiſely, that ſhe might better judge of the man's diſpoſition by his hand than by his eye; and if the hands do ſtrike treacherouſly, he can never be admitted to friendſhip, who ſpeaks fairly and weeps pitifully. Friendſhip is the greateſt honeſty and ingenuity in the World.

4. Never accuſe thy friend, nor believe him that does; if thou doſt, thou haſt broken the skin; but he that is angry with every little fault breaks the bones of friendſhip; and when we conſider that in ſociety and the accidents of every day, in which no man is conſtantly pleaſed or diſpleaſed with the ſame things; we ſhall find reaſon to impute the change unto our ſelves; and the emanations of the Sun are ſtill glorious, when our eyes are ſore: and we have no reaſon to be angry with an eternal light, becauſe we have a changeable and a mortal faculty. But however, do not think thou didſt contract alliance with an Angel, when thou didſt take thy friend into thy boſom; he may be weak

as

as well as thou art, and thou mayest need pardon as well as he, and

μάσος ἐπὶ σμικρᾷ προφάσει φίλον ἀνδρ' ἀπολέσσης
Πειθόμενος χαλεπῇ Κύρνε διαβολίῃ.
Εἰτις ἁμαρτωλῆσι φίλον ἐπὶ πάντι χολῶτο
Οὐτος ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἄρθμιοι ὔτε φίλοι.
Theog.

that man loves flattery more than friendship, who would not only have his friend, but all the contingencies of his friend to humour him.

5. Give thy friend counsel wisely and charitably, but leave him to his liberty whether he will follow thee or no: and be not angry if thy counsel be rejected: for, *advice is no Empire*, and he is not my friend that will be my Judge whether I will or no. *Neoptolemus* had never been honoured with the victory and spoils of *Troy* if he had attended to the tears and counsel of *Lycomedes*, who being afraid to venture the young man, fain would have had him sleep at home safe in his little Island.

Island. He that gives advice to his friend and *exacts obedience* to it, does not the kindness and ingenuity of a friend, but the office and pertness of a School-master.

6. Never be a Judge between thy friends in any matter where both set their hearts upon the victory: If strangers or enemies be litigants, what ever side thou favourest, thou getteſt a friend, but when friends are the parties thou loseſt one.

7. Never comport thy self so, as that thy friend can be afraid of thee: for then the state of the relation alters when a new and troublesome passion supervenes. *ODERUNT quos METUUNT. Perfect love casteth out fear,* and no man is friend to a Tyrant; but that friendship is Tyranny where the love is changed into fear, equality into empire, society into obedience; for then all my kindness to him also will be no better than flattery.

8. When you admonish your friend, let it be without bitterness; when you chide him, let it be without reproach; when you praise him, let it be with worthy

thy purposes and for just causes, and in friendly measures; too much of that is flattery, too little is envy; if you do it justly, you teach him true measures: but when others praise him, rejoyce, though they praise not thee, and remember that if thou esteemest his praise to be thy disparagement, thou art envious, but neither just nor kind.

9. When all things else are equal prefer an old friend before a new. If thou meanest to spend thy friend, and make a gain of him till he be weary, thou wilt esteem him as a beast of burden, the worse for his age; But if thou esteemest him by noble measures, he will be better to thee by thy being used to him, by trial and experience, by reciprocation of indearments, and an habitual worthiness. An old friend is like old wine, which when a man hath drunk, he doth not desire new, because he saith the old is better. But every old friend was new once; and if he be worthy keep the new one till he become old.

10. After all this, treat thy friend nobly, love to be with him, do to him all the

the worthineſſes of love and fair endearment, according to thy capacity and his; Bear with his infirmities till they approach towards being criminal; but never diſſemble with him, never deſpiſe him, never leave him. * Give him gifts and upbraid him not, ‖ and refuſe not his kindneſſes, and be ſure never to deſpiſe the ſmalneſs or the impropriety of them. *Confirmatur amor beneficio accepto*: A gift (ſaith *Solomon*) faſteneth friendſhips; for as an eye that dwells long upon a ſtar muſt be refreſhed with leſſer beauties and ſtrengthened with greens and looking-glaſſes, leſt the ſight become amazed with too great a ſplendor; ſo muſt the love of friends ſometimes be refreſhed with mate-

* *Extra fortunam eſt quicquid donatur amicis;*
Quas dederis ſolas ſemper habebis opes.
Mart. l. 5. ep. 43.
Et tamen hoc vitium, ſed non leve, ſit licet unum,
Quod colit ingratas pauper amicitias.
Quis largitur opes veteri fidoque ſodali?
ep. 19.

‖ *Non bellè quædam faciunt duo: ſufficit unus*
Huic operi: ſi vis ut loquar ipſe tace.
Crede mihi quamvis ingentia Poſthume dones,
Authoris pereunt garrulitate ſui.
ep. 53.

rial and low Careſſes; leſt by ſtriving to be *too divine* it become *leſs humane*: It muſt be allowed its ſhare of *both*: It is *humane* in giving pardon and fair conſtruction, and openneſs and ingenuity, and keeping ſecrets; it hath *ſomething* that is *divine*, becauſe it is *beneficent*; but *much* becauſe it is *eternal*.

THE END.

FIVE
LETTERS
More, To
PERSONS
Changed, and Tempted to a Change
IN THEIR
RELIGION.

By the same Author.

The I. Letter.

A Copy of the first Letter written to a Gentlewoman newly seduced to the Church of Rome.

M. B.

I Was desirous of an opportunity in *London* to have discourſed with you concerning ſomething of neareſt concernment to you, but the multitude of my little affairs hindred me, and have brought upon you this trouble to read a long Letter, which yet I hope you will be more willing to do, becauſe it comes from one who hath a great reſpect to your perſon, and a very great charity to your ſoul: I muſt confeſs I was on your behalf trou-

bled when I heard you were fallen from the Communion of the Church of *England*, and entred into a voluntary, unneceſſary ſchiſm, and departure from the Laws of the King, and the Communion of thoſe with whom you have always lived in charity, going againſt thoſe Laws in the defence and profeſſion of which your Husband died, going from the Religion in which you were Baptized, in which for ſo many years, you lived piouſly and hoped for Heaven, and all this without any ſufficient reaſon, without neceſſity or juſt ſcandal miniſtred to you; and to aggravate all this, you did it in a time when the Church of *England* was perſecuted, when ſhe was marked with the Characteriſms of her Lord, the marks of the Croſs of *Jeſus*, that is, when ſhe ſuffered for a holy cauſe and a holy conſcience, when the Church of *England* was more glorious than at any time before; Even when ſhe could ſhew more Martyrs and Confeſſors than any Church this day in Chriſtendom, even then when a King died in the profeſſion of her Religion, and thouſands of Prieſts, learned and pious Men ſuffered the ſpoiling of their goods rather than they would forſake

forſake one Article of ſo excellent a Religion; So that ſeriouſly it is not eaſily to be imagined that any thing ſhould move you, unleſs it be that which troubled the perverſe Jews, and the Heathen Greek, *Scandalum crucis*, the ſcandal of the Croſs; You ſtumbled at that Rock of offence, You left us becauſe we were afflicted, leſſened in outward circumſtances and wrapped in a cloud; but give me leave only to remind you of that ſad ſaying of the Scripture, that you may avoid the conſequent of it; *They that fall on this ſtone ſhall be broken in pieces, but they on whom it ſhall fall ſhall be grinded to powder.* And if we ſhould conſider things but prudently, it is a great argument that the ſons of our Church are very conſcientious and juſt in their perſwaſions, when it is evident, that we have no temporal end to ſerve, nothing but the great end of our ſouls, all our hopes of preferment are gone, all ſecular regards, only we ſtill have truth on our ſides, and we are not willing with the loſs of truth to change from a perſecuted to a proſperous Church, from a Reformed to a Church that will not be reformed; leſt we give ſcandal to good

people that suffer for a holy conscience, and weaken the hands of the afflicted; of which if you had been more careful, you would have remained much more innocent.

But I pray, give me leave to consider for you, because you in your change considered so little for your self, what fault, what false doctrine, what wicked and dangerous proposition, what defect, what amiss did you find in the Doctrine and Liturgy and Discipline of the Church of *England?*

For its doctrine, It is certain it professes the belief of all that is written in the Old and New Testament, all that which is in the three Creeds, the Apostolical, the Nicene, and that of *Athanasius*, and whatsoever was decreed in the four General Councils, or in any other truly such, and whatsoever was condemned in these, our Church hath legally declared it to be Heresie. And upon these accounts above four whole ages of the Church went to Heaven; they baptized all their Catechumens into this faith, their hopes of Heaven

ven was upon this and a good life, their Saints and Martyrs lived and died in this alone, they denied Communion to none that professed this faith. This is the Catholick faith, so saith the Creed of *Athanasius*; and unless a company of Men have power to alter the faith of God, whosoever live and die in this faith, are intirely *Catholick* and *Christian*. So that the Church of *England* hath the same faith without dispute that the Church had for 400. or 500. Years, and therefore there could be nothing wanting here to saving faith, if we live according to our belief.

2. *For the Liturgy* of the Church of *England*, I shall not need to say much, because the case will be very evident; First, Because the disputers of the Church of *Rome* have not been very forward to object any thing against it, they cannot charge it with any evil: 2. Because for all the time of King *Edw.* 6. and till the eleventh year of Queen *Elizabeth*, your people came to our Churches and prayed with us, till the Bull of *Pius Quintus* came out upon temporal regards, and made a Schism by forbidding the Queens Subjects

to pray as by Law was here appointed, though the prayers were good and holy, as themselves did believe. That Bull enjoyned Recusancy, and made that which was an act of Rebellion, and Disobedience, and Schism, to be the character of your Roman Catholicks. And after this, what can be supposed wanting in order to salvation? We have the Word of God, the Faith of the Apostles, the Creeds of the Primitive Church, the Articles of the four first general Councils, a holy Liturgy, excellent Prayers, perfect Sacraments, Faith and Repentance, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermons of Christ, and all the precepts and counsels of the Gospel; We teach the necessity of good works, and require and strictly exact the severity of a holy life; We live in obedience to God, and are ready to die for him, and do so when he requires us so to do; We speak honourably of his most holy Name, we worship him at the mention of his Name, we confess his Attributes, we love his Servants, we pray for all Men, we love all Christians, even our most erring Brethren, we confess our sins to God and to our Brethren whom we have offended, and to God's

Attend

God's Miniſters in caſes of Scandal, or of a troubled Conſcience. We communicate often, we are enjoyned to receive the holy Sacrament thrice every Year at leaſt; Our Prieſts abſolve the penitent, our Biſhops ordain Prieſts, and confirm baptized perſons, and bleſs their people and intercede for them; and what could here be wanting to Salvation? what neceſſity forced you from us? I dare not ſuſpect it was a temporal regard that drew you away, but I am ſure it could be no ſpiritual.

But now that I have told you, and made you to conſider from whence you went, give me leave to repreſent to you, and tell you whither you are gone, that you may underſtand the nature and conditions of your change: For do not think your ſelf ſafe, becauſe they tell you that you are come to the Church; You are indeed gone from one Church to another, from a better to a worſe, as will appear in the induction; the particulars of which before I reckon, give me leave to give you this advice; if you mean in this affair to underſtand what you do; it were better you enquired what your Religion is, than what your

your Church is; for that which is a true Religion to day, will be so to morrow and for ever; but that which is a holy Church to day, may be heretical at the next change, or may betray her trust, or obtrude new Articles in contradiction to the old, or by new interpretations may elude ancient truths, or may change your Creed, or may pretend to be the Spouse of Christ when she is idolatrous, that is, adulterous to God: Your Religion is that which you must, and therefore may competently understand; You must live in it; and grow in it, and govern all the actions of your life by it; and in all questions concerning the Church, you are to choose your Church by the Religion, and therefore this ought first and last to be enquired after. Whether the Roman Church be the Catholick Church, must depend upon so many uncertain enquiries, is offered to be proved by so long, so tedious a method, hath in it so many intrigues and Labyrinths of Question, and is (like a long line) so impossible to be perfectly straight, and to have no declination in it when it is held by such a hand as yours, that unless it be by material enquiries into the

the Articles of the Religion, you can never hope to have juſt grounds of confidence. In the mean time you can conſider this; if the Roman Church were the Catholick, that is, ſo as to exclude all that are not of her communion, then the Greek Churches had as good turn Turks as remain damned Chriſtians, and all that are in the communion of all the other Patriarchal Churches in Chriſtendom, muſt alſo periſh like Heathens, which thing before any Man can believe, he muſt have put off all reaſon, and all modeſty, and all charity; And who can with any probability think that *the Communion of Saints* in the Creed is nothing but the *Communion of Roman Subjects*, and the Article of the Catholick Church was made up to diſpark the incloſures of *Jeruſalem*, but to turn them into the pale of *Rome*, and the Church is as limited as ever it was, ſave only that the Synagogue is tranſlated to *Rome*, which I think you will eaſily believe was a Propoſition the Apoſtles underſtood not. But though it be hard to truſt to it, it is alſo ſo hard to prove it, that you ſhall never be able to underſtand the meaſures of that queſtion, and therefore

fore your ſalvation can never depend upon it. For no good or wiſe perſon can believe that God hath tied our Salvation to impoſſible meaſures, or bound us to an Article that is not by us cognoſcible, or intends to have us conducted by that which we cannot underſtand; and when you ſhall know that Learned men, even of the Roman party are not agreed concerning the Catholick Church that is infallibly to guide you, ſome ſaying that it is the virtual Church, that is, the Pope; ſome, that it is the repreſentative Church, that is, a Council; Some, that it is the Pope and the Council, the virtual Church and the repreſentative Church together; Some that neither of theſe, nor both together are infallible; but only, the eſſential Church, or the diffuſive Church is the Catholick, from whom we muſt at no hand diſſent; you will quickly find your ſelf in a wood, and uncertain whether you have more than a word in exchange for your ſoul, when you are told you are in the Catholick Church. But I will tell you what you may underſtand, and ſee and feel, ſomething that your ſelf can tell whether I ſay true or no concerning it. You are

now

now gone to a Church that protects it self by arts of subtilty and arms, by violence and persecuting all that are not of their minds, to a Church in which you are to be a Subject of the King so long as it pleases the Pope: In which you may be absolved from your Vows made to God, your Oaths to the King, your Promises to Men, your duty to your Parents in some cases: A Church in which Men pray to God, and to Saints in the same Form of words in which they pray to God, as you may see in the Offices of Saints, and particularly of our Lady: a Church in which Men are taught by most of the principal Leaders to worship Images with the same worship with which they worship God and Christ, or him or her whose Image it is, and in which they usually picture God the Father, and the holy Trinity, to the great dishonour of that sacred mystery, against the doctrine and practice of the Primitive Church, against the expres doctrine of Scripture, against the honour of a Divine Attribute; I mean, the immensity and spirituality of the Divine Nature; You are gone to a Church that pretends to be Infallible, and yet is infinitely deceived in

in many particulars, and yet endures no contradiction, and is impatient her children should enquire into any thing her Priests obtrude. You are gone from receiving the whole Sacrament to receive it but half; from Christ's Institution to a humane invention, from Scripture to uncertain Traditions, and from ancient Traditions to new pretences, from prayers which ye understood to prayers which ye understand not, from confidence in God to rely upon creatures, from intire dependence upon inward acts to a dangerous temptation of resting too much in outward ministeries, in the external work of Sacraments and of Sacramentals: You are gone from a Church whose worshipping is simple, Christian and Apostolical, to a Church where Mens consciences are loaden with a burden of Ceremonies greater than that in the days of the Jewish Religion (for the Ceremonial of the Church of *Rome* is a great Book in Folio) greater I say than all the Ceremonies of the Jews contained in *Leviticus*, &c. You are gone from a Church where you were exhorted to read the Word of God, the holy Scriptures from whence you found instruction, institution,

tution, comfort, reproof, a treaſure of all excellencies, to a Church that ſeals up that fountain from you, and gives you drink by drops out of ſuch Ciſterns as they firſt make, and then ſtain, and then reach out; and if it be told you that ſome Men abuſe Scripture, it is true, for if your Prieſts had not abuſed Scripture, they could not thus have abuſed you, but there is no neceſſity they ſhould, and you need not, unleſs you liſt; any more than you need to abuſe the Sacraments or decrees of the Church, or the meſſages of your friend, or the Letters you receive, or the Laws of the Land, all which are liable to be abuſed by evil perſons, but not by good people and modeſt underſtandings. It is now become a part of your Religion to be ignorant, to walk in blindneſs, to believe the Man that hears your Confeſſions, to hear none but him, not to hear God ſpeaking but by him, and ſo you are liable to be abuſed by him, as he pleaſe, without remedy. You are gone from us, where you were only taught to worſhip God through Jeſus Chriſt, and now you are taught to worſhip Saints and Angels with a worſhip at leaſt dangerous, and in ſome

things

things proper to God; for your Church worships the Virgin *Mary* with burning incense and candles to her, and you give her presents, which by the consent of all Nations used to be esteemed a worship peculiar to God, and it is the same thing which was condemned for Heresie in the *Collyridians*, who offered a Cake to the Virgin *Mary*; A Candle and a Cake make no difference in the worship; and your joyning God and the Saints in your worship and devotions, is like the device of them that fought for King and Parliament, the latter destroys the former. I will trouble you with no more particulars, because if these move you not to consider better, nothing can.

But yet I have two things more to add of another nature, one of which at least may prevail upon you, whom I suppose to have a tender and a religious Conscience.

The first is, That all the points of difference between us and your Church are such as do evidently serve the ends of Covetousness and ambition, of power and riches,

riches, and so stand vehemently suspected of design, and art, rather than truth of the Article and designs upon Heaven. I instance in the Pope's power over Princes and all the World; his power of dispensation, The exemption of the Clergy from jurisdiction of Princes, The Doctrine of Purgatory and Indulgences which was once made means to raise a portion for a Lady, the Neece of Pope *Leo* the Tenth; The Priests power advanced beyond authority of any warrant from Scripture, a doctrine apt to bring absolute obedience to the Papacy; but because this is possibly too nice for you to suspect or consider, that which I am sure ought to move you is this.

That you are gone to a Religion in which though through God's grace prevailing over the follies of men, there are I hope, and charitably suppose many pious Men that love God, and live good lives, yet there are very many doctrines taught by your Men, which are very ill Friends to a good life. I instance in your Indulgences and pardons, in which vitious men put a great confidence, and rely greatly upon them. The doctrine of Purgatory

gatory which gives countenance to a sort of Christians who live half to God and half to the World, and for them this doctrine hath found out a way that they may go to Hell and to Heaven too. The Doctrine that the Priests absolution can turn a trifling repentance into a perfect and a good, and that suddenly too, and at any time, even on our Death-bed, or the minute before your death, is a dangerous heap of falshoods, and gives licence to wicked people, and teaches men to reconcile a wicked debauched life, with the hopes of Heaven. And then for penances and temporal satisfaction, which might seem to be as a plank after the shipwrack of the duty of Repentance, to keep men in awe, and to preserve them from sinking in an Ocean of Impiety, it comes to just nothing by your doctrine; for there are so many easie ways of Indulgences and getting Pardons, so many con-fraternities, stations, privileg'd Altars, little Offices, *Agnus Dei*'s, amulets, hallowed devices, swords, roses, hats, Church-yards, and the fountain of these annexed indulgences the Pope himself, and his power of granting what, and when, and to whom he list, that

that he is a very unfortunate man that needs to smart with penances; and after all, he may choose to suffer any at all, for he may pay them in Purgatory if he please, and he may come out of Purgatory upon reasonable terms, in case he should think it fit to go thither; So that all the whole duty of *Repentance* seems to be destroyed with devices of Men that seek power and gain, and find errour and folly; insomuch that if I had a mind to live an evil Life, and yet hope for Heaven at last, I would be of your religion above any in the World.

But I forget I am writing a Letter: I shall therefore desire you to consider upon the premises, which is the safer way. For surely it is lawful for a Man to serve God without Images; but that to worship Images is lawful, is not so sure. It is lawful to pray to God alone, to confess him to be true, and every Man a liar, to call no man Master upon Earth, but to rely upon God teaching us; But it is at least hugely disputable and not at all certain that any Man, or society of Men can be infallible, that we may put our trust in Saints,

Saints, in certain extraordinary Images, or burn Incenſe and offer conſumptive oblations to the Virgin *Mary*, or make vows to perſons, of whoſe ſtate, or place, or capacities, or condition we have no certain revelation: we are ſure we do well when in the holy Communion we worſhip God and Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, but they who alſo worſhip what ſeems to be bread, are put to ſtrange ſhifts to make themſelves believe it to be lawful. It is certainly lawful to believe what we ſee and feel; but it is an unnatural thing upon pretence of faith to disbelieve our eyes, when our ſenſe and our faith can better be reconciled, as it is in the queſtion of the Real preſence, as it is taught by the Church of *England*.

So that unleſs you mean to prefer a danger before ſafety, temptation to unholineſs before a ſevere and a holy religion, unleſs you mean to loſe the benefit of your prayers by praying what you perceive not, and the benefit of the Sacrament in great degrees by falling from Chriſt's inſtitution, and taking half inſtead of all; unleſs you deſire to provoke God to jealouſie by Images, and Man to jealouſie in pro-

professing a Religion in which you may in many cases have leave to forfeit your faith and lawful trust; unless you will still continue to give scandal to those good people with whom you have lived in a common Religion, and weaken the hearts of Gods afflicted ones; unless you will choose a Catechism without the second Commandment, and a Faith that grows bigger or less as men please, and a Hope that in many degrees relyes on men and vain confidences, and a Charity that damns all the World but your selves; unless you will do all this, that is, suffer an abuse in your Prayers, in the Sacrament, in the Commandments, in Faith, in Hope, in Charity, in the Communion of Saints, and your duty to your Supreme, you must return to the bosom of your Mother the Church of *England* from whence you have fallen, rather weakly than maliciously, and I doubt not but you will find the Comfort of it all your Life, and in the Day of your Death, and in the Day of Judgment. If you will not, yet I have freed mine own soul, and done an act of Duty and Charity, which at least you are bound to take kindly if you will not entertain it obediently.

Now

Now let me add this, that although most of these objections are such things which are the open and avowed doctrines or practices of your Church, and need not to be proved as being either notorious or confessed; yet if any of your Guides shall seem to question any thing of it, I will bind my self to verifie it to a tittle, and in that too which I intend them, that is, so as to be an objection obliging you to return, under the pain of folly or heresie, or disobedience, according to the subject matter. And though I have propounded these things now to your consideration, yet if it be desired I shall represent them to your eye, so that even your self shall be able to give sentence in the behalf of truth. In the mean time give me leave to tell you of how much folly you are guilty in being moved by such mock-arguments as your men use when they meet with women and tender consciences and weaker understandings.

The first is, where was your Church before *Luther*? Now if you had called upon them to speak something against your

+ The Common People were taught to answer this Question of the Papists by saying — In the Bible, where Names never was.

your religion from Scripture, or right reason, or Universal Tradition, you had been secure as a Tortoise in her shell; a Cart pressed with sheaves could not have oppressed your cause or person, though you had confessed you understood nothing of the mysteries of succession doctrinal or personal. For if we can make it appear that our religion was that which Christ and his Apostles taught, let the truth suffer what eclipses or prejudices can be supposed, let it be hid like the holy fire in the captivity, yet what Christ and his Apostles taught us is eternally true, and shall by some means or other be conveyed to us, even the enemies of truth have been conservators of that truth by which we can confute their errors. But if you still ask where it was before *Luther?* I answer it was there where it was after; even in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; and I know no warrant for any other religion; and if you will expect I should shew any society of Men who professed all the doctrines which are now expressed in the confession of the Church of *England*; I shall tell you it is unreasonable; because

☞ some of our truths are now brought into our publick confessions that they might be oppos'd against your errors; before the occasion of which there was no need of any such confessions, till you made many things necessary to be professed, which are not lawful to be believed. For if we believe your superinduc'd follies, we shall do unreasonably, unconscionably, and wickedly; but the questions themselves are so useless abstracting from the accidental necessity which your follies have brought upon us, that it had been happy if we had never heard of them more than the Saints and Martyrs did in the first ages of the Church; but because your Clergy have invaded the liberty of the Church, and multiplied the dangers of damnation, and pretend new necessities, and have introduc'd new articles, and affright the simple upon new pretensions, and slight the very institution and the Commands of Christ and of the Apostles, and invent new Sacramentals constituting Ceremonies of their own head, and promise grace along with the use of them, as if they were not Ministers but Lords of the Spirit, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men,

men, and make void the Commandment of God by their tradition, and have made a strange body of Divinity; therefore it is necessary that we should immure our Faith by the refusal of such vain and superstitious dreams: but our faith was completed at first, it is no other than that which was delivered to the Saints, and can be no more for ever.

So that it is a foolish demand to require that we should shew before *Luther* a systeme of Articles declaring our sense in these questions: It was long before they were questions at all; and when they were made questions, they remained so, a long time; and when by their several pieces they were determined, this part of the Church was oppressed with a violent power; and when God gave opportunity, then the yoke was broken; and this is the whole progress of this affair. But if you will still insist upon it, then let the matter be put into equal ballances, and let them shew any Church whose confession of Faith was such as was obtruded upon you at *Trent*! and if your Religion be *Pius Quartus* his Creed at *Trent*, then we

Obj. of the Papist.

Answ.

also have a question to ask, and that is, *Where was your Religion before Trent?*

The Council of *Trent* determined that the souls departed before the Day of Judgment enjoy the Beatifical Vision. It is certain this Article could not be shewn in the Confession of any of the ancient Churches; for most of the Fathers were of another opinion. But that which is the greatest offence of Christendom is not only that these doctrines which we say are false were yet affirmed, but that those things which the Church of God did always reject, or held as uncertain, should be made Articles of Faith, and so become parts of your religion; and of these it is that I again ask the question which none of your side shall ever be able to answer for you: Where was your Religion before *Trent?* I could instance in many particulars; but I shall name one to you, which because the thing of it self is of no great consequence, it will appear the more unreasonable and intolerable that your Church should adopt it into the things of necessary belief, especially since it was only a matter of fact, and they took the

false

false part too. For in the 21. Sess. Chap. 4. it is affirmed, That *although the holy Fathers did give the Sacrament of the Eucharist to Infants, yet they did it without any necessity of salvation*; that is, they did not believe it necessary to their salvation, which is notoriously false, and the contrary is marked out with the black-lead of every man almost that reads their Works; and yet your Council says this is *fine controversiâ credendum*; to be believed without all controversie: and all Christians forbidden to believe or teach otherwise. So that here it is made an Article of Faith amongst you, that a man shall neither believe his reason nor his eyes: and who can shew any confession of Faith in which all the *Trent* doctrine was professed and enjoyned under pain of damnation? and before the Council of *Constance*, the Doctrine touching the Popes power was so new, so decried, that as *Gerson* says he hardly should have escaped the note of Heresie that would have said so much as was there defined: so that in that Article which now makes a great part of your belief, where was your Religion before the

De potest. Eccles. conf. 12.

Council of *Constance*? and it is notorious that your Council of *Constance* determined the doctrine of the half-communion with a *Non obstante* to Christ's institution, that is, with a defiance to it, or a noted, observed neglect of it, and with a profession it was otherwise in the Primitive Church. Where then was your Religion before *John Hus* and *Hierom* of *Prague*'s time, against whom that Council was convened? But by this instance it appears most certainly that your Church cannot shew her confessions immediately after Christ, and therefore if we could not shew ours immediately before *Luther*, it were not half so much; for since you receded from Christ's Doctrine we might well recede from yours; and it matters not who or how many or how long they professed your doctrine, if neither Christ nor his Apostles did teach it: so that if these Articles constitute your Church, your Church was invisible at the first, and if ours was invisible afterwards, it matters not; *For yours was invisible in the days of light, and ours was invisible in the days of darkness.* For our Church was always visible in the reflections of Scripture, and he that had

his

his eyes of faith and reason might easily have seen these truths all the way which constitute our Church. But I add yet farther, that our Church before *Luther* was there where your Church was, in the same place and in the same persons; for divers of the errors which have been amongst us reformed, were not the constituent Articles of your Church before *Luther's* time; for before the last Councils of your Church a man might have been of your Communion upon easier terms; and Indulgences were indeed a practice, but no Article of Faith before your men made it so, and that very lately, and so were many other things besides. So that although your men cozen the credulous and the simple by calling yours *The old Religion*, yet the difference is vast between Truth and their affirmative, even as much as between old Errors and new Articles. For although Ignorance and Superstition had prepared the ore, yet the Councils of *Constance* and *Basil* and *Trent* especially, were the forges and the mint.

Lastly, if your men had not by all the vile and violent arts of the World stopped

the mouths of diſſenters, the queſtion would quickly have been anſwered, or our Articles would have been ſo confeſſed, ſo owned and ſo publick, that the queſtion could never have been asked; but in deſpite of all oppoſition, there were great numbers of profeſſors who did proteſt and profeſs and practiſe our doctrines contrary to your Articles; as it is demonſtrated by the Divines of *Germany* in *Illyricus* his *Catalogus teſtium veritatis*, and in Biſhop *Mortons* appeal.

But with your next objection you are better pleaſed, and your Men make moſt noiſe with it. For you pretend that by our confeſſion ſalvation may be had in your Church; but your men deny it to us; and therefore by the confeſſion of both ſides you may be ſafe, and there is no queſtion concerning you; but of us there is great queſtion, for none but our ſelves ſay that we can be ſaved.

I anſwer, 1. That ſalvation may be had in your Church, is it ever the truer becauſe we ſay it? If it be not, it can add no confidence to you, for the propoſition

gets

gets no strength by your affirmative. But if it be, then our authority is good or else our reason; and if either be, then we have more reason to be believed speaking of our selves; because we are concerned to see that our selves may be in a state of hope; and therefore we would not venture on this side if we had not greater reason to believe well of our selves than of you. And therefore believe us when it is more likely that we have greater reason, because we have greater concernments, and therefore greater considerations.

2. As much charity as your Men pretend us to speak of you, yet it is a clear case our hope of your salvation is so little that we dare not venture our selves on your side. The Burger of *Glamorgan* being to pass a River in his Journey to *Daventry*, bad his Man try the Ford; telling him he hoped he should not be drowned, for though he was afraid the River was too deep, yet he thought his Horse would carry him out, or at least, the Boats would fetch him off. Such a confidence we may have of you, but you will find that but little warranty, if you remember how

great an interest it is that you venture.

3. It would be remembred that though the best ground of your hope is not the goodness of your own faith, but the greatness of our charity; yet we that charitably hope well of you, have a fulness of assurance of the truth and certainty of our own way; and however you can please your selves with Images of things as having no firm footing for your trifling confidence, yet you can never with your tricks out-face us of just and firm adherences; and if you were not empty of supports, and greedy of bulrushes, snatching at any thing to support your sinking cause, you would with fear and trembling consider the direct dangers which we demonstrate to you to be in your religion rather than flatter your selves with collateral, weak, and deceitful hopes of accidental possibilities, that some of you may escape.

4. If we be more charitable to you than you are to us, acknowledge in us the beauty and essential form of Christian Religion; be sure you love as well as make use of our charity; but if you make our

charity

charity an argument against us, remember that you render us evil in exchange for good; and let it be no brag to you that you have not that charity to us, for therefore the Donatists were condemned for Heretics and Schismaticks because they damn'd all the World, and afforded no charity to any that was not of their Communion.

5. But that our charity may be such indeed, that is, that it may do you a real benefit, and not turn into Wormwood and Colloquintida, I pray take notice in what sense it is that we allow salvation may possibly be had in your Church. We warrant it not to any, we only hope it for some, we allow it to them as to the Sadducees in the Law, and to the *Corinthians* in the Gospel who denied the resurrection; that is, till they were sufficiently instructed, and competently convinced, and had time and powers to out-wear their prejudices and the impresses of their education and long perswasion. But to them amongst you who can and do consider and yet determine for error and interest, we have a greater charity, even so much

as to labour and pray for their conversion, but not so much fondness as to flatter them into boldness and pertinacious adherencies to matters of so great danger.

6. But in all this affair, though your men are very bold with God and leap into his Judgment-seat before him, and give wild sentences concerning the salvation of your own party and the damnation of all that disagree, yet that which is our charity to you, is indeed the fear of God, and the reverence of his judgments; we do not say that all Papists are certainly damn'd; we wish and desire vehemently that none of you may perish; but then this charity of judgment relates not to you, nor is derived from any probability which we see in your doctrines that differ from ours; but because we know not what rate and value God puts upon the article; It concerns neither you nor us to say, this or that man shall be damn'd for his opinion; for besides that this is a bold intrusion into that secret of God which shall not be opened till the Day of Judgment, and besides that we know not what allays and abatements are to be made by the

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good meaning and the ignorance of the man; all that can concern us is to tell you that you are in error, that you depart from Scripture, that you exercise tyranny over souls, that you leave the Divine institution, and prevaricate Gods Commandment, that you divide the Church without truth and without necessity, that you tie Men to believe things under pain of damnation which cannot be made very probable, much less certain; and therefore that you sin against God and are in danger of his eternal displeasure; but in giving the final sentence as we have no more to do than your men have, yet so we refuse to follow your evil example; and we follow the glorious precedent of our Blessed Lord; who decreed and declared against the crime, but not against the Criminal before the day. He that does this, or that, is in danger of the Council, or in danger of judgment, or liable and obnoxious to the danger of hell fire; so we say of your greatest errors; they put you in the danger of perishing; but that you shall or shall not perish, we leave it to your Judge; and if you call this charity, it is well, I am sure it is piety and the fear of God.

Note

7. Whe-

7. Whether you may be saved, or whether you shall be damned for your errors, does neither depend upon our affirmative nor your negative; but according to the rate and value which God sets upon things. Whatever we talk, things are as they are, not as we dispute, or grant, or hope; and therefore it were well if your men would leave abusing you and themselves with these little arts of indirect support. For many men that are warranted, yet do eternally perish, and you in your Church damn Millions who I doubt not shall reign with *Jesus* eternally in the Heavens.

8. I wish you would consider, that if any of our men say salvation may be had in your Church, it is not for the goodness of your new propositions, but only because you do keep so much of that which is our Religion, that upon the confidence of that we hope well concerning you. And we do not hope any thing at all that is good of you or your Religion as it distinguishes from us and ours: we hope that the good which you have common with us may obtain pardon directly or indirectly, for may be

be an antidote of the venome, and an amulet against the danger of your very great errors, so that if you can derive any confidence from our concession, you must remember where it takes root; not upon any thing of yours, but wholly upon the excellency of ours; you are not at all safe, or warranted for being Papists, but we hope well of some of you, for having so much of the Protestant: and if that will do you any good, proceed in it, and follow it whithersoever it leads you.

9. The safety that you dream of which we say to be on your side, is nothing of allowance of warranty, but a hope that is collateral, indirect and relative; we do not say any thing whereby you can conclude yours to be safer than ours, for it is not safe at all, but extremely dangerous; we affirm those errors in themselves to be damnable, some to contain in them Impiety, some to have Sacriledge, some Idolatry, some Superstition, some practices to be conjuring and charming and very like to Witchcraft, as is your hallowing of Water, and baptizing Bells, and exorcizing Demoniacks, and what safety there can be

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in these, or what you can fancy we should allow to you, I suppose you need not boast of. Now because we hope some are saved amongst you, you must not conclude yours to be safe; for our hope relies upon this. There are many of your propositions in which we differ from you, that Thousands amongst you understand and know nothing of, it is to them as if they were not, it is to them now as it was before the Council, they hear not of it. And though your Priests have taken a course that the most ignorant do practise some of your abominations most grossly, yet we hope this will not be laid upon them who (as S. *Austin*'s expression is) *cautâ sollicitudine quærunt veritatem, corrigi parati cùm invenerint*: do according as they are able warily and diligently seek for truth, and are ready to follow it when they find it; Men who live good lives, and repent of all their evils known and unknown. Now if we are not deceived in our hopes, these Men shall rejoyce in the eternal goodness of God, which prevails over the malice of them that misguide you, but if we be deceived in our hopes of you, your guides have abus'd you, and the blind leaders

leaders of the blind will fall together. For,

10. If you will have the secret of this whole affair, this it is. The hopes we have of any of you, (as it is known) principally relies upon the hopes of your repentance. Now we say that a Man may repent of an error which he knows not of; as he that prays heartily for the pardon of all his sins and errors known and unknown; by his general repentance may obtain many degrees and instances of mercy. Now thus much also your Men allow to us; those who live well, and die in a true though but general repentance of their sins and errors even amongst us, your best and wisest Men pronounce to be in a savable condition. Here then we are equal, and we are as safe by your confession as you are by ours. But because there are some Bigots of your faction fierce and fiery who say that a general repentance will not serve our turns, but it must be a particular renunciation of Protestancy; these men deny not only to us but to themselves too, all that comfort which they derive from our Concession, and indeed which they

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can hope for from the mercies of God. For be you ſure we think as ill of your errors as you can ſuppoſe of our Articles; and therefore if for errors (be they on which ſide it chances) a general repentance will not ſerve the turn without an actual dereliction, then flatter not your ſelves by any thing of our kindneſs to your party; for you muſt have a particular if a general be not ſufficient. But if it be ſufficient for you, it is ſo for us, in caſe we be in error as your men ſuppoſe us; but if it will not ſuffice us for remedy to thoſe errors you charge us with, neither will it ſuffice you; for the caſe muſt needs be equal as to the value of repentance and malignity of the error: and therefore theſe men condemn themſelves and will not allow us to hope well of them; but if they will allow us to hope, it muſt be by affirming the value of a general repentance; and if they allow that, they muſt hope as well of ours as we of theirs: but if they deny it to us, they deny it to themſelves, and then they can no more brag of any thing of our conceſſion. This only I add to this conſideration; that your men do not, cannot charge upon

upon us any doctrine that is in its matter and effect impious; there is nothing positive in our doctrine, but is either true or innocent, but we are accus'd for denying your superstructures: ours therefore (if we be deceived) is but like a sin of omission; yours are sins of commission in case you are in the wrong (as we believe you to be) and therefore you must needs be in a greater danger than we can be supposed, by how much sins of omission are less than sins of commission.

11. Your very way of arguing from our charity is a very fallacy and a trick that must needs deceive you if you rely upon it. For whereas your men argue thus: The Protestants say we Papists may be saved; and so say we too: but we Papists say that you Protestants cannot; therefore it is safest to be a Papist; consider that of this argument if it shall be accepted, any bold heretick can make use, against any modest Christian of a true perswasion. For, if he can but out-face the modesty of the good man, and tell him he shall be damn'd; unless that modest man say as much of him, you see impudence shall get the

the better of the day. But it is thus in every error. Fifteen Bishops of *Jerusalem* in immediate succession were circumcised, believing it to be necessary so to be; with these, other Christian Churches who were of the uncircumcision did communicate: Suppose now that these Bishops had not only thought it necessary for themselves but for others too, this argument you see was ready: you of the uncircumcision who do communicate with us, think that we may be saved though we are circumcised, but we do not think that you who are not circumcised can be saved, therefore it is the safest way to be circumcised: I suppose you would not have thought their argument good, neither would you have had your children circumcised. But this argument may serve the Presbyterians as well as the Papists. We are indeed very kind to them in our sentences concerning their salvation; and they are many of them as unkind to us; If they should argue so as you do, and say, you Episcopal men think we Presbyterians though in errors can be saved, and we say so too: but we think you Episcopal men are Enemies of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ;

Christ; and therefore we think you in a damnable condition, therefore it is safer to be a Presbyterian: I know not what your men would think of the argument in their hands, I am sure we had reason to complain that we are used very ill on both hands for no other cause but because we are charitable. But it is not our case alone; but the old Catholicks were used just so by the Donatists in this very argument, as we are used by your men. The Donatists were so fierce against the Catholicks, that they would re-baptize all them who came to their Churches from the other: But the Catholicks, as knowing the Donatists did give right Baptism, admitted their Converts to Repentance, but did not re-baptize them. Upon this score, the Donatists triumphed, saying, You Catholicks confess our Baptism to be good, and so say we: But we Donatists deny your Baptism to be good; therefore it is safer to be of our side than yours. Now what should the Catholicks say or do? Should they lie for God and for Religion, and to serve the ends of Truth say the Donatists Baptism was not good? That they ought not. Should they damn all the Donatists, and

and make the rent wider? It was too great already. What then? They were quiet, and knew that the Donatists fought advantages by their own fierceness, and trampled upon the others charity; but so they hardned themselves in error, and became evil, because the others were good.

I shall trouble you no further now, but desire you to consider of these things with as much caution, as they were written with charity.

Till I hear from you, I shall pray to God to open your heart and your understanding, that you may return from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your first work. Which that you may do, is the hearty desire of

Your very affectionate Friend and Servant,

JER. TAYLOR.

The

The II. Letter.

Written to a Person newly converted to the Church of England.

Madam,

I Bless God I am safely arrived where I desired to be after my unwilling departure from the place of your abode and danger: And now because I can have no other expression of my tenderness, I account that I have a treble Obligation to signifie it by my care of your biggest and eternal interest. And because it hath pleased God to make me an Instrument of making you to understand in some fair measure the excellencies of a true and holy Religion, and that I have pointed out such follies and errors in the Roman Church,

Church, at which your understanding being forward and pregnant, did of it self start as at imperfect ill-looking Propositions, give me leave to do that now which is the purpose of my Charity, that is, teach you to turn this to the advantage of a holy life, that you may not only be changed but converted. For the Church of *England* whither you are now come is not in condition to boast her self in the reputation of changing the opinion of a single person, though never so excellent; She hath no temporal ends to serve which must stand upon fame and noises; all that she can design, is to serve God, to advance the honour of the Lord, and the good of souls, and to rejoyce in the Cross of Christ.

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First, therefore I desire you to remember that as now you are taught to pray both publickly and privately, in a Language understood, so it is intended your affections should be forward, in proportion to the advantages which your prayer hath in the understanding part. For though you have been often told and have heard, that ignorance is the mother of devotion,

you

you will find that the proposition is unnatural and against common sense and experience; because it is impossible to desire that of which we know nothing, unless the desire it self be fantastical and illusive: it is necessary that in the same proportion in which we understand any good thing, in the same we shall also desire it, and the more particular and minute your notices are, the more passionate and material also your affections will be towards it; and if they be good things for which we are taught to pray, the more you know them the more reason you have to love them. It is monstrous to think that devotion, that is, passionate desires of religious things, and the earnest prosecutions of them should be produced by any thing of ignorance or less perfect notices in any sense. Since therefore you are taught to pray, so that your understanding is the præcentor or the Master of the Quire, and you know what you say; your desires are made humane, religious, express, material (for these are the advantages of Prayers and Liturgies well understood) be pleased also to remember, that now if you be not also passionate and devout for the things you mention, you

will want the Spirit of prayer, and be more inexcusable than before. In many of your prayers before (especially the publique) you heard a voice but saw and perceived nothing of the sense, and what you understood of it was like the man in the Gospel that was half blind, he saw men walking like Trees, and so you possibly might perceive the meaning of it in general; You knew where they came to the Epistle, when to the Gospel, when the Introit, when the *Pax*, when any of the other more general periods were; but you could have nothing of the Spirit of prayer, that is, nothing of the devotion and the holy affections to the particular excellencies which could or ought there to have been represented, but now you are taught how you may be really devout, it is made facil and easie, and there can want nothing but your consent and observation.

2. Whereas now you are taken off from all humane confidences, from relying wholly and almost ultimately upon the Priests power and external act, from reckoning prayers by numbers, from forms and out-sides, you are not to think that the

the Priests power is less, that the Sacraments are not effective, that your prayers may not be repeated frequently; but you are to remember, that all outward things and Ceremonies, all Sacraments and Institutions work their effect in the vertue of Christ, by some moral Instrument; The Priests in the Church of *England* can absolve you as much as the Roman Priests could fairly pretend; but then we teach that you must first be a penitent and a returning person, and our absolution does but manifest the work of God, and comfort and instruct your Conscience, direct and manage it; You shall be absolved here, but not unless you live an holy life; So that in this you will find no change but to the advantage of a strict life; we will not flatter you and cozen your dear soul by pretended ministeries, but we so order our discourses and directions that all our ministrations may be really effective, and when you receive the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, or the Lords Supper, it does more good here than they do there, because if they consecrate rightly, yet they do not communicate you fully; and if they offer the whole representative Sacrifice, yet they

do not give you the whole Sacrament; only we enjoyn that you come with so much holiness, that the grace of God in your heart may be the principal, and the Sacrament in our hands may be the ministring and assisting part: we do not promise great effects to easie trifling dispositions, because we would not deceive, but really procure to you great effects, and therefore you are now to come to our offices with the same expectations as before, of pardon, of grace, of sanctification; but you must do something more of the work your self, that we may not do less in effect than you have in your expectation; We will not to advance the reputation of our power deceive you into a less blessing.

3. Be careful that you do not flatter your self, that in our Communion you may have more ease and liberty of life; for though I know your pious soul desires passionately to please God and to live religiously, yet I ought to be careful to prevent a temptation, lest it at any time should discompose your severity: Therefore as to confession to a Priest (which how it is usually

usually practised among the Roman party, your self can very well account, and you have complain'd sadly, that it is made an ordinary act, easie and transient, oftentime matter of temptation, sometimes impertinent, but) suppose it free from such scandal to which some mens folly did betray it, yet the same severity you'l find among us; for though we will not tell a lie to help a sinner, and say that is necessary which is only appointed to make men do themselves good, yet we advise and commend it, and do all the work of souls to all those people that will be saved by all means; to devout persons, that make Religion the business of their lives, and they that do not so in the Churches of the Roman Communion, as they find but little advantage by periodical confessions, so they feel but little awfulness and severity by the injunction; you must confess to God all your secret actions, you must advise with a holy man in all the affairs of your soul,) you will be but an ill friend to your self if you conceal from him the state of your spiritual affairs: We desire not to hear the circumstance of every sin, but when matter of justice is concern-

ed, or the nature of the sin is changed, that is, when it ought to be made a Question; and you will find that though the Church of *England* gives you much liberty from the bondage of innumerable Ceremonies and humane devices, yet in the matter of holiness you will be tied to very great service, but such a service as is perfect freedom, that is, the service of God and the love of the holy Jesus, and a very strict religious life; for we do not promise heaven, but upon the same terms it is promised us, that is, *Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus*: and as in faith we make no more to be necessary than what is made so in holy Scripture, so in the matter of Repentance we give you no easie devices, and suffer no dissening definitions of it, but oblige you to that strictness which is the condition of being saved, and so expressed to be by the infallible Word of God; but such as in the Church of *Rome* they do not so much stand upon.

Madam, I am weary of my Journey, and although I did purpose to have spoken many things more, yet I desire that my

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not doing it may be laid upon the account of my weariness, all that I shall add to the main business is this.

4. Read the Scripture diligently, and with an humble spirit, and in it observe what is plain, and believe and live accordingly. Trouble not your self with what is difficult, for in that your duty is not described. NB

5. Pray frequently and effectually; I had rather your prayers should be often than long. It was well said of *Petrarch*, *Magno verborum frano uti decet cum superiore colloquentem.* When you speak to your Superior you ought to have a bridle upon your tongue, much more when you speak to God. I speak of what is decent in respect of our selves and our infinite distances from God: but if love makes you speak, speak on, so shall your prayers be full of charity and devotion, *Nullus est amore superior, ille te coget ad veniam, qui me ad multiloquium*; Love makes God to be our friend, and our approches more united and acceptable; and therefore you may say to God, *the same love* NB X

which made me speak, will also move thee to hear and pardon: Love and devotion may enlarge your Litanies, but nothing else can, unless Authority does interpose.

6. Be curious not to communicate but with the true Sons of the Church of *England*, lest if you follow them that were amongst us, but are gone out from us, because they were not of us) you be offended and tempted to impute their follies to the Church of *England*.

7. Trouble your self with no controversies willingly, but how you may best please God by a strict and severe conversation.

8. If any Protestant live loosely, remember that he dishonours an excellent Religion, and that it may be no more laid upon the charge of our Church, than the ill lives of most Christians may upon the whole Religion.

9. Let no Man or Woman affright you with declamations and scaring words of *Heretick*, and *Damnation*, and *Changeable*, for

for these words may be spoken against them that return to light, as well as to those that go to darkness, and that which Men of all sides can say, it can be of effect to no side upon its own strength or pretension.

THE END.

POST-SCRIPT.

Madam,

IF You shall think it fit that these Papers pass further than Your own eye and Closet, I desire they may be consign'd into the hands of my worthy friend Dr. Wedderburne: For I do not only expose all my sickness to his cure, but I submit my weaknesses to his censure, being as confident to find of him charity for what is pardonable, as remedy for what is curable: but indeed Madam I look upon that worthy Man as an Idea of friendship, and if I had no other notices of Friendship or conversation to instruct me than his, it were sufficient: For whatsoever I can say of Friendship, I can say of his, and as all that know him reckon him amongst the best Physicians, so I know him worthy to be reckoned amongst the best friends.

The

The III. Letter.

Written to a Gentleman that was tempted to the Communion of the Romish *Church.*

SIR,

YOU needed not to make the Preface of an excuse for writing so friendly, and so necessary a Letter of Inquiry. It was your kindness to my person which directed your addresses hither; and your duty which ingag'd you to inquire somewhere.

I do not doubt but you, and very many other ingenious and conscientious persons, do

do every day meet with the Tempters of the *Roman* Church, who like the *Phariſees* compaſs Sea and Land to get a Proſelyte; at this I wonder not; for as *Demetrius* ſaid, by this craft they get their living: but I wonder that any ingenious perſon, and ſuch as I perceive you to be, can be ſhaken by their weak aſſaults: for their batteries are made up with impoſſible propoſitions, and weak and violent prejudices reſpectively; and when they talk of their own infallibility, they prove it with falſe Mediums (ſay we) with fallible Mediums as themſelves confeſs; and when they argue us of an Uncertain faith, becauſe we pretend to no infallibility, they are themſelves much more Uncertain, becauſe they build their pretence of infallibility upon that which not only can, but will deceive them: and ſince they can pretend no higher for their infallibility than prudential motives, they break in pieces the ſtaff upon which they lean, and with which they ſtrike us.

But Sir, you are pleaſed to ask two Queſtions. 1. Whether the Apoſtles of our Bleſſed Lord did not *Orally* deliver many

many things neceſſary to Salvation which were not committed to writing? To which you add this *aſſumentum*, (in which becauſe you deſire to be anſwered, I ſuppoſe you meant it for another Queſtion) *viz.* whether in thoſe things which the Church of *Rome* retains, and we take no notice of, *She* be an Innovator, or a conſerver of Tradition; and whether any thing which *ſhe* ſo retains was or was not eſteemed neceſſary?

The anſwer to the firſt part, will conclude the ſecond. I therefore anſwer, that whatſoever the Apoſtles did deliver as neceſſary to Salvation, all that was written in the Scriptures: and that to them who believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, there needs no other Magazine of Divine truths but the Scripture. And this the Fathers of the firſt and divers ſucceeding Ages do Unanimouſly affirm. I will ſet down two or three, ſo plain that either you muſt conclude them to be deceivers, or that you will need no more but their teſtimony.

The

Ethic. definit. 26. The words of S. *Basil* are these, Δεῖ πᾶν ῥῆμα ἢ πρᾶγμα πιστοῦσθαι τῇ μαρτυρίᾳ τῆς θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς, &c. Every word and every thing ought to be made credible, or believ'd by the testimony of the Divinely-inspired Scripture: both for the confirmation of good things, and also for the reproof of the evil.

S. *Cyril* of *Jerusalem*, *catech.* 12. *illuminat.* saith, Attend not to my inventions, for you may possibly be deceiv'd: but trust no word unless thou dost learn it from the Divine Scriptures: and in *Catech.* 4. *illum.* Δεῖ γὰρ περὶ τῶν θείων καὶ ἁγίων τῆς πίστεως μυστηρίων, &c. For it behoves us not to deliver so much as the least thing μηδὲ τὸ τυχὸν, of the Divine and holy mysteries of Faith without the Divine Scriptures, nor to be moved with probable discourses: Neither give credit to me speaking, unless what is spoken be demonstrated by the Holy Scriptures. For that is the security of our Faith, σωτηρία τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν, which is derived not from witty inventions, but from the demonstration of Divine Scriptures.

Omne

Omne quod loquimur debemus affirmare de Scripturis Sanctis: ſo S. *Hierom* in *Pſal.* 89. And again, *Hoc quia de Scripturis authoritatem non habet, eadem facilitate contemnitur quâ probatur*, in *Matth.* 23.

Si quid dicitur abſque Scripturâ auditorum cogitatio claudicat. So S. *Chryſoſtom* in *Pſal.* 95. *homil.*

Theodoret, *dial.* 1. *cap.* 6. brings in the *Orthodox* Chriſtian ſaying to *Eraniſtes*: bring not to me your Logiſmes and Syllogiſmes, ἐγὼ γὰρ μόνῃ τοῖς δόγμασι τῇ θείᾳ γραφῇ. I rely only upon Scriptures. I could reckon very, very many more, both elder and later: and if there be any Univerſal Tradition conſigned to us by the Univerſal Teſtimony of Antiquity: it is this, that the Scriptures are a perfect repoſitory of all the Will of God, of all the Faith of Chriſt: and this I will engage my ſelf to make very apparent to you, and certain againſt any oppoſer.

Upon the ſuppoſition of which it follows, that whatever the Church of *Rome* obtrudes

obtrudes as neceſſary to Salvation, and an Article of Faith that is not in Scripture, is an Innovation in matter of Faith, and a Tyranny over Conſciences: which whoſoever ſubmits to, prevaricates the rule of the Apoſtle, commanding us, that we ſtand faſt in the liberty, with which Chriſt hath ſet us free.

To the other Queſtions, Whether an Eccleſiaſtical Tradition be of equal authority with Divine? I anſwer Negatively: And I believe I ſhall have no adverſary in it, except peradventure ſome of the Jeſuited Bigots. An Eccleſiaſtical Tradition, *viz.* a poſitive conſtitution of the Church delivered from hand to hand, is in the power of the Church to alter: but a Divine is not. Eccleſiaſtical Traditions in matters of Faith there are none, but what are alſo Divine; as for Rituals Eccleſiaſtical deſcending by Tradition, they are confeſſedly alterable: but till they be altered by abrogation, or deſuetude, or contrary cuſtome, or a contrary reaſon, or the like, they do oblige by vertue of that Authority whatſoever it is that hath power over you. I know not what D. *P. G.*

P. G. did say, but I am confident they who reported it of him, were mistaken: He could not say or mean what is charged upon him.

I have but two things more to speak to. One is, you desire me to recite what else might impede your compliance with the *Roman* Church? I answer, Truth and Piety hinder you. For you must profess the belief of many false propositions, and certainly believe many Uncertain things, and be uncharitable to all the World but your own party, and make Christianity a faction, and you must yield your reason a servant to man, and you must plainly prevaricate an institution of Christ, and you must make an apparent departure from the Church in which you received your Baptism and the Spirit of God, if you go over to *Rome*. But Sir, I refer you to the two Letters I have lately published at the end of my discourse of Friendship; and I desire you to read my Treatise of the Real presence: and if you can believe the doctrine of Transubstantiation, you can put off your reason and your

your ſenſe, and your religion, and all the inſtruments of Credibility when you pleaſe: and theſe are not little things; In theſe you may periſh: an error in theſe things is practical; but our way is ſafe, as being upon the defence, and intirely reſting upon Scripture, and the Apoſtolical Churches.

The other thing I am to ſpeak to is, the report you have heard of my inclinations to go over to *Rome*. Sir, that party which needs ſuch lying ſtories for the ſupport of their Cauſe, proclaim their Cauſe to be very weak, or themſelves to be very evil Advocates. Sir, be confident, they dare not tempt me to do ſo, and it is not the firſt time they have endeavoured to ſerve their ends by ſaying ſuch things of me. But I bleſs God for it; it is perfectly a Slander, and it ſhall I hope, for ever prove ſo. Sir, if I may ſpeak with you, I ſhall ſay very many things more for your confirmation. Pray to God to guide you; and make no change ſuddenly: For if their way be true to day, it will be ſo to morrow; and you need not

This report probably took its riſe from Taylor's attempt in his Liberty of Prophecying, to make the moſt of

not make haſt to undo your ſelf. Sir, I wiſh you a ſetled mind and a holy Conſcience; and that I could ſerve you in the capacity of

Your very Loving Friend
and Servant in our
Bleſſed Lord,

JER. TAYLOR.

The

The IV. Letter.

To the same Person.

SIR,

I Perceive that You are very much troubled; and I see also that you are in great danger; but that also troubles me, because I see they are little things and very weak and fallacious that move you. You propound many things in your Letter in the same disorder as they are in your Conscience: to all which I can best give answers when I speak with you; to which because you desire, I invite you, and promise you a hearty endeavour to give you satisfaction in all your material inquiries. Sir, I desire you to make no haste to change, in case you be so miserable as to have it in your thoughts: for to go over to the Church of *Rome* is like death, there

there is no recovery from thence without a Miracle; because Unwary souls (such are they who change from us to them) are with all the arts of wit and violence strangely entangled and ensur'd, when they once get the prey. Sir, I thank you for the Paper you inclosed. The men are at a loss, they would fain say something against that Book, but know not what. Sir, I will endeavour if you come to me, to restore you to peace and quiet; and if I cannot effect it, yet I will pray for it, and I am sure, God can. To his Mercy I commend you and rest

Your very affectionate
Friend in our
Blessed Lord,

JER. TAYLOR.

The

The V. Letter.

To the ſame Perſon.

SIR,

THE firſt Letter which you mention in this latter of the 10*th.* of *March*, I received not; I had not elſe failed to give you an anſwer; I was ſo wholly unknowing of it, that I did not underſtand your Servant's meaning when he came to require an anſwer. But to your Queſtion which you now propound, I anſwer.

Queſt. Whether without all danger of Superſtition or Idolatry we may not render Divine worſhip to our Bleſſed Saviour, as preſent in the Bleſſed Sacrament or Hoſt, according to his Humane Nature in that Hoſt?

Anſw.

Answ. We may not render Divine worſhip to him (as preſent in the Bleſſed Sacrament according to his Humane Nature) without danger of Idolatry: Becauſe he is not there according to his Humane Nature, and therefore, you give Divine worſhip to a *Non Ens*, which muſt needs be Idolatry. For *Idolum nihil eſt in mundo*, ſaith S. *Paul*, and Chriſt as preſent by his Humane Nature in the Sacrament is a *Non Ens*; for it is not true, there is no ſuch thing. He is preſent there by his Divine power, and his Divine Bleſſing, and the fruits of his Body, the real effective conſequents of his Paſſion: but for any other Preſence, it is *Idolum*, it is nothing in the world. Adore Chriſt in Heaven; for the Heavens muſt contain him till the time of reſtitution of all things. And if you in the reception of the Holy Sacrament worſhip him whom you know to be in Heaven; you cannot be concerned in duty to worſhip him in the Hoſt (as you call it) any more than to worſhip him in the Hoſt at *Noſtre Dame* when you are at S. *Peters* in *Rome*; for you ſee him no more in one place than another;

another; and if to believe him to be there in the Host at *Nostre Dame* be sufficient to cause you to worship him there, then you are to do so to him at *Rome*, though you be not present: for you believe him there; you know as much of Him by Faith in both places, and as little by sense in either. But however, this is a thing of infinite danger. God is a jealous God: He spake it in the matter of external worship, and of idolatry; and therefore do nothing that is like worshipping a meer creature, nothing that is like worshipping that which you are not sure it is God: and if you can believe the Bread when it is blessed by the Priest is God Almighty, you can if you please believe any thing else.

To the other parts of your Question, *viz.* Whether the same body be present really and Substantially, because we believe it to be there; or whether we do believe it to be there because God hath manifestly revealed it to be so, and therefore we revere and adore it accordingly.

I answer, 1. I do not know whether or no you do believe Him to be there really and Substantially. 2. If you do believe it so, I do not know what you mean by really and Substantially. 3. Whatsoever you do mean by it, if you do believe it to be there really and Substantially in any sense, I cannot tell why you believe it to be so: you best know your own reasons and motives of belief; for my part, I believe it to be there really in the sense I have explicated in my Book; and for those reasons which I have there alledged; but that we are to adore it upon that account, I no way understand. If it be Transubstantiated and you are sure of it: then you may pray to it, and put your trust in it; and believe the Holy Bread to be coeternal with the Father, and with the Holy Ghost. But it is strange that the Bread being consecrated by the power of the Holy Ghost, should be turn'd into the substance and nature of God, and of the Son of God: if so, does not the Son at that time proceed from the Holy Ghost, and not the Holy Ghost from

from the Son? But I am ashamed of the horrible proposition. Sir, I pray God keep you from these extremest dangers. I love and value you, and will pray for you and be, Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate
Friend to serve you,

JER. TAYLOR.

A DISCOURSE PROVING THAT THE Christian Religion IS FROM GOD.

GOD

Mr. Royston,

'Tis *reported You are making a new Impreſſion of ſome ſmall Tracts of Doctor* Taylor, *the late moſt Reverend Biſhop of* Down; *It will be very adviſable for You to take the Demonſtration of Chriſtian Religion, which is inſerted in his* Caſes of Conſcience, *pag.* 124. *of the firſt Edition, and let that follow the reſt; For 'tis a Diſcourſe which will be as uſeful for the generality of People in this Age, as any You can pick out of the whole Body of his Works; and being heretofore inſerted in the middle of a large*

Book, is not made ſo common to them, nor ſo purchaſeable, as your purſuing this deſign will rẽder it; and hereby you will do a work very acceptable to the Friends of Chriſtian Truth and Vertue, as well as to

Yours A. B.

A DISCOURSE PROVING THAT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS FROM GOD.

THis Diſcourſe, of all the diſputables in the World, ſhall require the feweſt things to be granted; even nothing but what was evident, even nothing but the very ſubject of the Queſtion, *viz.* That there was ſuch a Man as Jeſus Chriſt, that he pretended ſuch things and taught ſuch Doctrines: for he that will prove theſe things to be from God, muſt be allowed that they were from ſomething

or other. But this postulate I do not ask for need, but for orders sake and Art; for what the Histories of that Age reported as a publick affair, as one of the most eminent transactions of the World, that which made so much noise, which caused so many changes, which occasioned so many Wars, which divided so many hearts, which altered so many families, which procured so many deaths, which obtained so many Laws in favour, and suffered so many Rescripts in the disfavour of its self; that which was not done in a corner, but was 33 Years and more in acting; which caused so many Sects, and was opposed by so much Art, and so much power that it might not grow, which filled the World with noise, which effected such great changes in the bodies of Men by curing the diseased, and smiting the contumacious or the hypocrites, which drew so many eyes, and fill'd so many tongues, and imployed so many pens, and was the *care* and the *question* of the whole World at that time, and immediately after; that which was consigned by publick acts and records of Courts, which was in the Books of friends and enemies, which came accompanied and remarked with Eclipses

and

and Stars and Prodigies of Heaven and Earth, that which the *Jews* even in spite and against their wills confessed, and which the witty adversaries intending to overthrow, could never so much as challenge of want of truth in the matter of fact and story, that which they who are infinitely concerned that it should not be believed, or more, that it had never been, do yet only labour to make to appear not to have been Divine: Certainly, this thing is so certain that it was, that the defenders of it need not account it a kindness to have it presupposed; for never was any story in the world that had so many degrees of credibility, as the story of the person, life and death of Jesus Christ: And if he had not been a true Prophet, yet that he was in the world, and said and did such things cannot be denied; for even concerning *Mahomet* we make no question but he was in the world, and led a great part of Mankind after him, and what was less proved we infinitely believe; and what all men say, and no man denies, and was notorious in it self, of this we may make further inquiries whether it was all that which is pretended, for that it did make pretences and was in the

world,

world, needs no more probation.

But now, whether Jesus Christ was sent from God and delivered the Will of God, we are to take accounts from all the things of the world which were on him, or about him, or from him. Consider first his person: he was foretold by all the Prophets: He, I say, for that appears by the event, and the correspondencies of their sayings to his person: he was described by infallible characterisms which did fit him, and did never fit any but him; for when he was born, then was the fulness of time, and the Messias was expected at the time when Jesus did appear, which gave occasion to many of the godly then to wait for him, and to hope to live till the time of his revelation: and they did so, and with a spirit of Prophecy which their own Nation did confess and honour, glorified God at the revelation: and the most excellent and devout persons that were conspicuous for their piety did then rejoyce in him, and confess him; and the expectation of him at that time was so publick and famous, that it gave occasion to divers Impostors to abuse the credulity of the people in pretending to be the Messias; but not only the predictions of the time,

time, and the perfect Synchronisms did point him out, but at his birth a strange Star appeared, which guided certain Levantine Princes and Sages to the inquiry after him; a strange Star which had an irregular place and an irregular motion, that came by design, and acted by counsel, the counsel of the Almighty Guide, it moved from place to place, till it stood just over the House where the Babe did sleep; a Star of which the Heathen knew much, who knew nothing of him; a Star which *Chalcidius* affirmed to have signified the descent of God for the salvation of Man; a Star that guided the wise *Chaldees* to worship him with gifts (as the same disciple of *Plato* does affirm, and) as the holy Scriptures deliver; and this Star could be no secret; It troubled all the Country; It put *Herod* upon strange arts of security for his Kingdom, it effected a sad tragedy accidentally, for it occasioned the death of all the little Babes in the City, and voisinage of *Bethlehem*: But the birth of this young Child which was thus glorified by a Star, was also signified by an Angel, and was effected by the holy Spirit of God, in a manner which was in it self supernatural; a Virgin was his Mother,

Mother, and God was his Father, and his beginning was miraculous; and this matter of his birth of a Virgin was proved to an interested and jealous person, even to *Joseph* the supposed father of *Jesus*, it was affirmed publickly by all his family, and by all his disciples, and published in the midst of all his enemies, who by no artifice could reprove it, a matter so famous, that when it was urged as an argument to prove Jesus to be the Messias, by the force of a Prophecy in *Isaiah* [*A Virgin shall conceive a Son*] they who obstinately refused to admit him, did not deny the matter of fact, but denied that it was so meant by the Prophet, which if it were true, can only prove that Jesus was more excellent than was foretold by the Prophets, but that there was nothing less in him than was to be in the Messias; it was a matter so famous that the *Arabian* Physicians who can affirm no such things of their *Mahomet*, and yet not being able to deny it to be true of the Holy Jesus, endeavour to elevate and lessen the thing, by saying, It is not wholly beyond the force of nature, that a Virgin should conceive, so that it was on all hands undeniable, that the Mother of Jesus was a Virgin, a Mother

without

without a Man. This is that Jesus at whose presence before he was born, a Babe in his Mothers belly also did leap for joy, who was also a person extraordinary himself, conceived in his Mothers old age, after a long barrenness, signified by an Angel in the Temple, to his Father officiating his Priestly Office, who was also struck dumb for his not present believing; all the People saw it, and all his Kindred were witnesses of his restitution, and he was named by the Angel, and his Office declared to be the fore-runner of the holy Jesus; and this also was foretold by one of the old Prophets; for the whole story of this Divine person is a chain of providence and wonder, every link of which is a verification of a Prophecy, and all of it is that thing which from *Adam* to the Birth of *Jesus* was pointed at and hinted by all the Prophets, whose words in him passed perfectly into the event. This is that Jesus who as he was born without a Father, so he was learned without a Master, he was a Man without age, a Doctor in a Child's garments, disputing in the Sanctuary at 12. Years old. He was a sojourner in *Egypt*, because the poor Babe born of an indigent Mother was a formida-

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ble rival to a potent King, and this fear could not come from the design of the Infant, but must needs arise from the illustriousness of the Birth, and the Prophecies of the Child, and the sayings of the Learned, and the journey of the Wise-men, and the decrees of God; this journey and the return were both managed by the conduct of an Angel and a Divine dream, for to the Son of God all the Angels did rejoyce to minister. This Blessed Person made thus excellent by his Father, and glorious by miraculous consignations, and illustrious by the ministery of Heavenly spirits, and proclaimed to *Mary* and to *Joseph* by two Angels, to the Shepherds by a Multitude of the Heavenly Host, to the Wise men by a Prophecy and by a Star, to the *Jews* by the Shepherds, to the *Gentiles* by the three Wise men, to *Herod* by the Doctors of the Law, and to himself perfectly known by the inchasing his humane nature in the bosom and heart of God, and by the fulness of the Spirit of God, was yet pleased for 30. Years together to live an humble, a laborious, a chast and a devout, a regular and an even, a wise and an exemplar, a pious and an obscure life, without complaint, without sin, without design

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of fame, or grandeur of spirit, till the time came that the clefts of the rock were to open, and the Diamond give its lustre, and be worn in the Diadems of Kings, and then this Person was wholly admirable; for he was ushered into the World by the voice of a loud Crier in the Wilderness, a Person austere and wise, of a strange life, full of holiness and full of hardness, and a great Preacher of righteousness, a Man believed by all the People that he came from God, one who in his own Nation gathered Disciples publickly, and (which amongst them was a great matter) he was the Doctor of a new institution, and baptized all the Country; yet this man so great, so reverd, so followed, so listned to by King and People, by Doctors and by Ideots, by Pharisees and Sadducees, this man preached Jesus to the People, pointed out the Lamb of God, told that he must increase, and himself from all that fame must retire to give him place; he received him to Baptism after having with duty and modesty declared his own unworthiness to give, but rather a worthiness to receive Baptism from the holy hands of Jesus; but at the solemnity God sent down the holy Spirit upon his holy Son, and by a voice

voice from Heaven, a voice of thunder (as God was in that voice) declared that this was his Son, and that he was delighted in him. This voice from Heaven was such, so evident, so certain a conviction of what it did intend to prove, so known and accepted as the way of Divine revelation under the second Temple, that at that time every Man that desired a sign honestly, would have been satisfied with such a voice; it being the testimony by which God made all extraordinaries to be credible to his People from the days of *Esra*, to the death of the Nation; and that there was such a voice, not only then, but divers times after, was as certain, and made as evident as things of that nature can ordinarily be made. For it being a matter of fact, cannot be supposed infinite, but limited to time and place, heard by a certain number of persons, and was as a clap of Thunder upon ordinary accounts, which could be heard but by those who were within the sphere of its own activity; and reported by those to others, who are to give testimony as testimonies are required, which are credible under the test of two or three disinterested, honest, and true Men, and though this was done

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in the presence of more, and oftner than once, yet it was a divine testimony but at first, but is to be conveyed by the means of Men; and as God thundred from Heaven at the giving of the Law, though that he did so, we have notice only from the Books of *Moses* received from the *Jewish* Nation; so he did in the days of the *Baptist*, and so he did to *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, and so he did in the presence of the *Pharisees* and many of the common People; and as it is not to be supposed that all these would joyn their divided interests for and against themselves for the verification of a lye, so if they would have done it, they could not have done it without reproof of their own parties, who would have been glad by the discovery only to disgrace the whole story; but if the report of honest and just men so reputed, may be questioned for matter of fact, or may not be accounted sufficient to make faith when there is no pretence of Men to the contrary, besides that we can have no story transmitted to us, nor Records kept, no acts of Courts, no narratives of the days of old, no traditions of our Fathers; so there could not be left in nature any usual instrument whereby God could

after

after the manner of Men declare his own will to us, but either we should never know the will of Heaven upon earth, or it must be that God must not only tell it *once* but *always*, and not only *always to some men*, but *always to all men*; and then as there would be no use of History, or the honesty of Men, and their faithfulness in telling any act of God in declaration of his will, so there would be perpetual necessity of miracles, and we could not serve God directly with our understanding, for there would be no such thing as faith, that is, of assent without conviction of understanding, and we could not please God with believing, because there would be in it nothing of the will, nothing of love and choice; and that faith which is, would be like that of *Thomas*, to believe what we see or hear, and God should not at all govern upon Earth unless he did continually come himself: for thus, all Government, all Teachers, all Apostles, all Messengers would be needless, because they could not shew to the eye what they told to the ears of Men; And it might as well be disbelieved in all Courts and by all Princes, that this was not the letter of a Prince, or the act of a Man, or the writing

ting of his hand, and so all humane entercourse must cease, and all senses but the eye be useless as to this affair, or else to the ear all voices must be strangers but the principal, if I say, no reports shall make faith: But it is certain, that when these voices were sent from Heaven and heard upon Earth, they prevailed amongst many that heard them not, and Disciples were multiplied upon such accounts, or else it must be that none that did hear them could be believed by any of their friends and neighbours; for if they were, the voice was as effective at the reflex and rebound as in the direct emission, & could prevail with them that believed their brother or their friend, as certainly as with them that believed their own ears and eyes. NB

I need not speak of the vast numbers of miracles which he wrought; miracles which were not more demonstrations of his power than of his mercy; for they had nothing of pompousness and ostentation, but infinitely of charity and mercy, and that *permanent* and *lasting* and *often*: he opened the eyes of the blind, he made the crooked straight, he made the weak strong, he cured fevers with the touch of his hand, and an issue of blood Note. Note also

blood with the hem of his garment, and sore eyes with the spittle of his mouth and the clay of the earth; he multiplied the loaves and fishes, he raised the dead to life, a young maiden, the widows son of Naim, and Lazarus, and cast out Devils by the word of his mouth, which he could never do but by the power of God. For Satan does not cast out Satan, nor a house fight against it self, if it means to stand long, and the Devil could not help Jesus, because the holy Jesus taught Men virtue, called them from the worshipping Devils, taught them to resist the Devil, to lay aside all those abominable idolatries by which the Devil doth rule in the hearts of men: he taught men to love God, to fly from temptations to sin, to hate and avoid all those things of which the Devil is guilty, for Christianity forbids pride, envy, malice, lying, and yet affirms that the Devil is proud, envious, malicious, and the Father of lies; and therefore where ever Christianity prevails, the Devil is not worshipped, and therefore he that can think that a man without the power of God could over-turn the Devils principles, cross his designs, weaken his strengths, baffle him in his policies, befool him

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him and turn him out of possession, and make him open his own mouth against himself as he did often, and confess himself conquered by Jesus and tormented, as the Oracle did to *Augustus Cæsar*, and the Devil to *Jesus* himself, he I say, that thinks a meer man can do this, knows not the weaknesses of a man, nor the power of an Angel; but he that thinks this could be done by compact, and by consent of the Devil, must think him to be an Intelligence without understanding, a power without force, a fool and a sot to assist a power against himself, and to persecute the power he did assist, to stir up the World to destroy the Christians, whose Master and Lord he did assist to destroy himself; and when we read that *Porphyrius* an Heathen, a professed enemy to Christianity, did say; Ἰησοῦ τιμωμένου τὶς θεῶν δημοσίας ὠφελείας οὐκ ᾔσθετο, that since Jesus was worshipped, the gods could help no man, that is, the gods which they worshipped; the poor baffled enervated Dæmons: He must either think that the Devils are as foolish as they are weak, or else that they did nothing towards this declination of their power; and therefore that

Euseb. lib. 5. c. 1. præp. Evang.

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also

that they suffer it by a power higher than themselves, that is, by the power of God in the hand of Jesus.

But besides that God gave testimony from heaven concerning him; he also gave this testimony of himself to have come from God, because that *he did Gods will*; for he that is a good man and lives by the Laws of God and of his Nation, a life innocent and simple, prudent and wise, holy and spotless, unreproved and unsuspected, he is certainly by all wise men said in a good sense to be the son of God, but he who does well and speaks well, and calls all men to glorifie and serve God, and serves no ends but of holiness and charity, of wisdom of hearts and reformation of manners, this man carries great authority in his sayings, and ought to prevail with good men in good things, for good ends, which is all that is here required. But his nature was so sweet, his manners so humble, his words so wise and composed, his comportment so grave and winning, his answers so seasonable, his questions so deep, his reproof so severe and charitable, his pity so great and merciful, his preachings so full of reason and holiness, of weight and authority, his conver-

converſation ſo uſeful and beneficent, his poverty great but his alms frequent, his family ſo holy and religious, his and their imployment ſo profitable, his meekneſs ſo incomparable, his paſſions without difference, ſave only where zeal or pity carried him on to worthy and apt expreſſions, a perſon that never laughed, but often wept in a ſenſe of the calamities of others; he loved every man and hated no man, he gave counſel to the doubtful, and inſtructed the ignorant, he bound up the broken hearts, and ſtrengthened the feeble knees, he relieved the poor, and converted the ſinners, he deſpiſed none that came to him for relief, and as for thoſe that did not he went to them; he took all occaſions of mercy that were offered him, and went abroad for more; he ſpent his days in Preaching and healing, and his nights in Prayers and converſation with God, he was obedient to Laws and ſubject to Princes, though he was the Prince of *Judea* in right of his Mother, and of all the World in right of his Father; the People followed him, but he made no conventions, and when they were made, he ſuffered no tumults, when they would have made him a King he withdrew

himself, when he knew they would put him to death he offered himself; he knew mens hearts, and conversed secretly, and gave answer to their thoughts and prevented their questions; he would work a miracle rather than give offence, and yet suffer every offence rather than see God his Father dishonored, he exactly kept the Law of *Moses*, to which he came to put a period, and yet chose to signify his purpose onely by doing acts of mercy upon their Sabbath, doing nothing which they should call a breach of a Commandment, but healing sick people, a charity which themselves would do to beasts, and yet they were angry at him for doing it to their brethren: In all his life, and in all his conversation with his Nation, he was innocent as an Angel of light, and when by the greatness of his worth, and the severity of his doctrine, and the charity of his miracles, and the noises of the people, and his immense fame in all that part of the World, and the multitude of his disciples, and the authority of his Sermons, and his free reproof of their hypocrisie, and his discovery of their false doctrines and weak traditions, he had branded the reputation of the vicious Rulers

lers of the People, and they resolved to put him to death, they who had the biggest malice in the World, and the weakest accusations were forced to supply their want of articles against him by making truth to be his fault, and his office to be his crime, and his open confession of what was asked him to be his article of condemnation, and yet after all this they could not perswade the competent Judge to condemn him, or to find him guilty of any fault, and therefore they were forced to threaten him with *Cæsar's* name, against whom then they would pretend him to be an enemy, though in their charge they neither proved, nor indeed laid it against him, and yet to whatsoever they objected he made no return, but his silence and his innocence were remarkable and evident, without labour and reply, and needed no more argument than the Sun needs an advocate to prove that he is the brightest star in the firmament.

Well, so it was, they crucified him, and when they did they did as much put out the eye of heaven as destroy the Son of God; for when with an incomparable sweetness, and a patience exemplar to all ages of sufferers, he endured affronts, examinations,

scorns, insolencies of rude ungentle Tradesmen, cruel whippings, injurious, unjust and unreasonable usages from those whom he obliged by all the arts of endearment and offers of the biggest kindness, at last he went to death as to the work which God appointed him that he might become the Worlds sacrifice, and the great example of holiness, and the instance of representing by what way the World was to be made happy [even by sufferings and so entring into heaven] that he might (I say) become the Saviour of his Enemies, and the Elder Brother to his friends, and the Lord of Glory, and the fountain of its emanation. Then it was that God gave new testimonies from Heaven; The Sun was eclipsed all the while he was upon the Cross, and yet the Moon was in the full; that is, he lost his light, not because any thing in nature did invest him, but because the God of nature (as a Heathen at that very time confessed, who yet saw nothing of this sad iniquity) did suffer. The rocks did rend, the veil of the Temple divided of it self and opened the inclosures, and disparked the Sanctuary, and made it pervious to the Gentiles eye; the dead arose, and appeared in *Jerusalem*

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Salem to their friends, the Centurion and divers of the People smote their hearts, and were by these strange indications convinced that he was the Son of God. His garments were parted, and lots cast upon his inward coat, they gave him vinegar and gall to drink, they brake not a bone of him, but they pierced his side with a Spear, looking upon him whom they had pierced; according to the Prophecies of him, which were so clear and descended to minutes and circumstances of his passion, that there was nothing left by which they could doubt whether this were he or no who was to come into the World: But after all this, that all might be finally verified and no scruple left, after three days burial, a great stone being rolled to the face of the grave and the stone sealed, and a Guard of Souldiers placed about it, he arose from the grave, and for forty days together conversed with his followers and Disciples, and beyond all suspicion was seen of 500. Brethren at once, which is a number too great to give their consent and testimony to a lye, and it being so publickly and confidently affirmed at the very time it was done, and for ever after urged by all Christians, used

as the most mighty demonstration, prochimed, preached, talked of, even upbraided to the gain-sayers, affirmed by eye-witnesses, perswaded to the kindred and friends and the relatives and companions of all those 500. persons who were eye-witnesses, it is infinitely removed from a reasonable suspicion; and at the end of those days was taken up into Heaven in the sight of many of them, as *Elias* was in the presence of *Elisha*.

Now he of whom all these things are true, must needs be more than a meer man, and that they were true was affirmed by very many eye-witnesses, Men who were innocent, plain men, men that had no bad ends to serve, men that looked for no preferment by the thing in this life; Men to whom their Master told they were to expect not Crowns and Scepters, not praise of men or wealthy possessions, not power and ease, but a voluntary casting away care and attendance upon secular affairs that they might attend their Ministery; poverty and prisons, trouble and vexation, persecution and labour, whippings and banishment, bonds and death, and for a reward they must stay till a good day came, but that was not

to be at all in this World; and when the day of restitution and recompence should come, they should never know till it came, but upon the hope of this and the faith of Jesus, and the Word of God so taught, so consigned, they must rely wholly and for ever. Now let it be considered, how could matters of fact be proved better? and how could this be any thing, but such as to rely upon matters of fact? what greater certainty can we have of any thing that was ever done which we saw not, or heard not, but by the report of wise and honest persons? especially since they were such whose life and breeding was so far from ambition and pompousness, that as they could not naturally and reasonably hope for any great number of Proselytes, so the fame that could be hop'd for amongst them, as it must be a matter of their own procuring, and consequently uncertain, so it must needs be very inconsiderable, not fit to outweigh the danger and the loss, nor yet at all valuable by them whose education and pretences were against it? These we have plentifully. But if these Men are numerous and united, it is more. Then we have more; For so many did affirm these things which they

saw and heard, that Thousands of People were convinced of the truth of them: But then if these men offer their oath, it is yet more, but yet not so much as we have, for they sealed those things with their blood; they gave their life for a testimony; and what reward can any man expect, if he gives his life for a lye? who shall make him recompence, or what can tempt him to do it knowingly? But after all, it is to be remembred, that as God hates lying, so he hates incredulity; as we must not believe a lye, so neither stop up our eyes and ears against truth; and what we do every minute of our lives in matters of little and of great concernment, if we refuse to do in our Religion which yet is to be conducted as other humane affairs are, by humane instruments and arguments of perswasion proper to the nature of the thing, it is an obstinacy that is as contrary to humane reason as it is to Divine faith.

These things relate to the *person* of the *holy Jesus*, and prove sufficiently that it was *extraordinary*, that it was *divine*, that *God was with him*, that his power wrought in him; and therefore that it was his will which Jesus taught, and God signed. But then

then if nothing of all this had been, yet even the doctrine it self proves it self *Divine* and to come from God. 13

For it is a Doctrine perfective of humane nature, that teaches us to love God and to love one another, to hurt no man, and to do good to every man, it propines to us *offers* the noblest, the highest, and the bravest pleasures of the World; the joys of charity, the rest of innocence, the peace of quiet spirits, the wealth of beneficence, and forbids us only to be beasts and to be Devils, it allows all that God and nature intended, and only restrains the excrescencies of nature, and forbids us to take pleasure in that which is the only entertainment of Devils, in murders and revenges, malice and spiteful words and actions; it permits corporal pleasures where they can best minister to health and societies, to conversation of families and honour of Communities, it teaches men to keep their words that themselves may be secured in all their just interests, and to do good to others that good may be done to them; it forbids biting one another that we may not be devour'd by one another; and commands obedience to superiours, that we may not be ruined in confu-

sions; it combines Governments, and confirms all good Laws, and makes peace, and opposes and prevents Wars where they are not just, and where they are not necessary. It is a Religion that is life and spirit, not consisting in ceremonies and external amusements, but in the services of the heart, and the real fruit of lips and hands, that is, of good words and good deeds, it bids us to do that to God which is agreeable to his excellencies, that is, worship him with the best thing we have, and make all things else minister to it; it bids us to do that to our neighbour, by which he may be better: it is the perfection of the natural Law, and agreeable to our natural necessities, and promotes our natural ends and designs: it does not destroy reason, but instructs it in very many things, and complies with it in all, it hath in it both *heat* and *light*, and is not more effectual than it is beauteous; it promises every thing that we can desire, and yet promises nothing but what it does effect; it proclaims war against all vices, and generally does command every vertue; it teaches us with ease to mortifie those affections which reason durst scarce reprove, because she hath not strength enough

enough to conquer, and it does create in us those vertues which reason of her self never knew, and after they are known, could never approve sufficiently: it is a doctrine in which nothing is superfluous or burdensome, nor yet is there any thing wanting which can procure happiness to Mankind, or by which God can be glorified: and if wisdom, and mercy, and justice, and simplicity, and holiness, and purity, and meekness, and contentedness, and charity, be images of God and rays of Divinity, then that Doctrine in which all these shine so gloriously, and in which nothing else is ingredient must needs be from God; and that all this is true in the Doctrine of Jesus needs no other probation but the reading the words.

For that the words of Jesus are contained in the Gospels, that is, in the writings of them, who were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the actions and Sermons of Jesus, is not at all to be doubted; for in every sect we believe their own records of Doctrine and institution; for it is madness to suppose the Christians to pretend to be servants of the Laws of Jesus, and yet to make a Law of their own which he made not: no man

man doubts but that the *Alcoran* is the Law of *Mahomet*, that the old Testament contains the Religion of the *Jews*; and the authority of these Books is proved by all the arguments of the Religion, for all the arguments perswading to the Religion are intended to prove no other than is contained in those Books; and these having been for 1500. years and more, received absolutely by all Christian Assemblies, if any man shall offer to make a question of their authority, he must declare his reasons; for the Disciples of the Religion have sufficient presumption, security and possession, till they can be reasonably disturb'd; but that now they can never be, is infinitely certain, because we have a long, immemorial, universal tradition that these Books were written in those times, by those men whose Names they bear, they were accepted by all Churches at the very first notice, except some few of the later, which were first received by some Churches, and then consented to by all; they were acknowledged by the same, and by the next age for genuine; their authority published, their words cited, appeals made to them in all questions of Religion, because it was known and confessed

confeſſed that they wrote nothing but that they knew, ſo that they were not deceived; and to ſay they would lie muſt be made to appear by ſomething extrinſecal to this inquiry, and was never ſo much as plauſibly pretended by any Adverſaries, and it being a matter of another mans will, muſt be declared by actions, or not at all. But beſides the men that wrote them were to be believed becauſe they did Miracles, they wrote Prophecies, which are verified by the event: perſons were cured at their Sepulchres, a thing ſo famous that it was confeſſed even by the enemies of the Religion: and after all, that which the World ought to rely upon, is the wiſdom and the providence and the goodneſs of God; all which it concerned to take care that the Religion, which himſelf ſo adorned and proved by miracles and mighty ſigns, ſhould not be loſt, nor any falſe writings be obtruded in ſtead of true, leſt without our fault the will of God become impoſſible to be obeyed. But to return to the thing: All thoſe excellent things which ſingly did make famous ſo many ſects of Philoſophers, and remarked ſo many Princes of their ſects, all them united, and many more which their

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eyes (ὄμματα νυκτερίδων) dark and dim could not see, are heaped together in this system of wisdom and holiness. Here are plain precepts full of deepest mystery; here are the measures of holiness and approaches to God describ'd; obedience and conformity, mortification of the body, and elevations of the spirit; abstractions from earth, and Arts of society and union with heaven; degrees of excellencies, and tendences to perfection; imitations of God, and conversations with him; these are the heights and descents, upon the plain grounds of natural reason, and natural religion, for there is nothing commanded but what our reason by nature ought to choose, and yet nothing of natural reason taught but what is heightned and made more perfect by the Spirit of God; and when there is any thing in the Religion, that is against flesh and blood, it is only when flesh and blood is against us, and against reason, when flesh and blood either would hinder us from great felicity, or bring us into great misery: To conclude, it is such a Law, that nothing can hinder men to receive and entertain, but a pertinacious baseness and love to vice, and none can receive it but those who resolve

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to be good and excellent; and if the holy Jesus had come into the World with less splendor of power and mighty demonstrations, yet even the excellency of what he taught, makes him alone fit to be the Master of the World.

But then let us consider what this excellent person did effect, and with what instruments he brought so great things to pass. He was to put a period to the Rites of *Moses*, and the Religion of the Temple, of which the *Jews* were zealous even unto pertinacy; to reform the manners of all Mankind, to confound the wisdom of the Greeks, to break in pieces the power of the Devil, to destroy the worship of all false Gods, to pull down their Oracles, and change their Laws, and by principles wise and holy to reform the false discourses of the World. But see what was to be taught, A Trinity in the Unity of the God-head, τρία ἐν ἑνὶ ἐν τρία, that is the Christian Arithmetick, *Three are one and one are three*, so *Lucian* in his *Philopatris*, or some other derides the Christian Doctrine; See their Philosophy, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. No? *Ex nihilo omnia*, all things are made of nothing; and a *Man God* and a *God Man*, the same person

+ of nothing can come nothing.

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son finite and infinite, born in time, and yet from all eternity, the Son of God, but yet born of a Woman, and she a Maid, but yet a Mother; resurrection of the dead, reunion of soul and body; this was part of the Christian Physicks or their natural Philosophy. But then certainly their moral was easie and delicious. It is so indeed, but not to flesh and blood, whose appetites it pretends to regulate or to destroy, to restrain or else to mortifie: *fasting* and *penance*, and *humility*, *loving our enemies*, *restitution of injuries*, and *self-denial*, and *taking up the Cross*, and *losing all our goods*, and *giving our life for Jesus*: As the other was hard to believe, so this is as hard to do. But for whom and under whose conduct was all this to be believed, and all this to be done, and all this to be suffered? surely for some glorious and mighty Prince, whose splendor as far out-shines the *Roman* Empire as the jewels of *Cleopatra* out-shined the swadling clothes of the Babe at *Bethlehem*. No it was not so neither. For all this was for *Jesus* whom his followers preached; a poor Babe born in a stable, the son of a Carpenter, cradled in a cratch, swadled in poor clouts; it was for him whom they indeed call'd

call'd a God, but yet whom all the World knew, and they themselves said, was whip'd at a Post, nailed to a Cross; he fell under the malice of the *Jews* his Countrymen, and the power of his *Roman* Lords, a cheap and a pitiful sacrifice without beauty and without splendor. The design is great, but does not yet seem possible; But therefore let us see what instruments the Holy Jesus choose, to effect these so mighty changes, to perswade so many propositions, to endear so great sufferings, to overcome so great enemies, to master so many impossibilities which *this* Doctrine and *this* Law from *this* Master were sure to meet withal.

Here, here it is that the Divinity of the power is proclaimed. When a Man goes to war he raises as great an Army as he can to out-number his Enemy, but when God fights, three hundred men that lap like a dogg are sufficient; nay one word can dissolve the greatest army. He that means to effect any thing must have means of his own proportionable, and if they be not, he must fail, or derive them from the mighty. See then with what instruments the holy Jesus sets upon this great reformation of the world. Twelve men of obscure and poor birth,

birth, of contemptible Trades and quality, without learning, without breeding; these men were sent into the midst of a knowing and wise World to dispute with the most famous Philosophers of *Greece*, to outwit all the learning of *Athens*, to out-preach all the *Roman* Orators; to introduce into a newly setled Empire, which would be impatient of novelties and change, such a change as must destroy all their Temples, or remove thence all their gods: against which change all the zeal of the World, and all the passions, and all the seeming pretences which they could make, must needs be violently opposed: a change that introduced new Laws, and caused them to reverse the old, to change that Religion under which their Fathers long did prosper, and under which the *Roman* Empire obtained so great a grandeur, for a Religion which in appearance was silly and humble, meek and peaceable, not apt indeed to do harm, but exposing men to all the harm in the world, abateing their courage, blunting their swords, teaching peace and unactiveness, and making the Souldiers arms in a manner useless, and untying their military girdle; a Religion which contradicted their reasons of State, and

and erected new Judicatories, and made the *Roman* Courts to be silent and without causes; a Religion that gave countenance to the poor and pitiful (but in a time when riches were adored, and ambition esteemed the greatest nobleness, and pleasure thought to be the chiefest good) it brought no peculiar blessing to the rich or mighty, unless they would become poor and humble in some real sense or other; a Religion that would change the face of things, and would also pierce into the secrets of the soul, and unravel all the intrigues of hearts, and reform all evil manners, and break vile habits into gentleness and counsel: that such a Religion in such a time, preached by such mean persons, should triumph over the Philosophy of the World, and the arguments of the Subtle, and the Sermons of the eloquent, and the power of Princes, and the interest of States, and the inclinations of nature, and the blindness of zeal, and the force of custom, and the pleasures of sin, and the Bulle Arts of the Devil, that is, against wit, and power, and money, and Religion, and wilfulness, and fame, and Empire, which are all the things in the World that can make a thing impossible; this I say could not be

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by the proper force of such instruments; for no Man can span Heaven with an Infant palm, nor govern wise Empires with Diagrams. It were impudence to send a footman to command *Cæsar* to lay down his arms, to disband his legions, and throw himself into *Tyber*, or keep a Tavern next to *Pompey's* Theatre; but if a sober man shall stand alone unarm'd, undefended, or unprovided, and shall tell that he will make the Sun stand still, or remove a Mountain, or reduce *Xerxes* his Army to the scantling of a single Troop, he that believes he will and can do this, must believe he does it by a higher power than he can yet perceive, and so it was in the present transaction. For that the holy Jesus made invisible powers to do him visible honors, that his Apostles hunted the Dæmons from their Tripods, their Navels, their Dens, their hollow Pipes, their Temples, and their Altars, that he made the Oracles silent, as *Lucian*, *Porphyrie*, *Celsus*, and other Heathens confess; that against the order of new things, which let them be never so profitable or good do yet suffer reproach, and cannot prevail unless they commence in a time of advantage and favour, yet that this should flourish like the Palm

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by preſſure, grow glorious by oppoſition, thrive by perſecution, and was demonſtrated by objections, argues a higher cauſe than the immediate inſtrument; now how this higher cauſe did intervene is viſible and notorious: The Apoſtles were not learned, but the holy Jeſus promiſed that he would ſend down wiſdom from above, from the Father of ſpirits; they had no power, but they ſhould be inveſted with power from on high; they were *ignorant* and *timorous*, but he would make them *learned* and *confident*, and ſo he did: he promiſed that in a few days he would ſend the holy Ghoſt upon them, and he did ſo, after ten days they felt and ſaw a glorious immiſſion from heaven, lights of movable fire ſitting upon their heads, and that light did illuminate their hearts, and the mighty ruſhing wind inſpired them with a power of ſpeaking divers languages, and brought to their remembrances all that Jeſus did and taught, and made them wiſe to conduct ſouls, and bold to venture, and prudent to adviſe, and powerful to do miracles, and witty to convince gain-ſayers, and hugely inſtructed in the Scriptures, and gave them the ſpirit of Government, and the ſpirit of Prophecy. This thing

thing was so publick that at the first notice of it three thousand souls were converted on that very day, at the very time when it was done; for it was certainly a visible demonstration of an invisible power, that ignorant persons who were never taught, should in an instant speak all the Languages of the *Roman* Empire; and indeed this thing was so necessary to be so, and so certain that it was so, so publick and so evident, and so reasonable, and so useful, that it is not easie to say whether it was the indication of a greater power, or a greater wisdom; and now the means was proportionable enough to the biggest end; without learning they could not confute the learned World, but therefore God became their Teacher: without power they could not break the Devils violence, but therefore God gave them power; without courage they could not contest against all the violence of the Jews and Gentiles; but therefore God was their strength and gave them fortitude; without great caution and providence they could not avoid the traps of crafty Persecutors, but therefore God gave them caution, and made them provident, and as *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* received the spirit of God, the

spirit

spirit of understanding to enable them to work excellently in the Tabernacle, so had the Apostles to make them wise for the work of God and the Ministeries of his Diviner Tabernacle, *which God pitched, not man.* Immediately upon this, the Apostles to make a fulness of demonstration and an undeniable conviction gave the spirit to others also, to *Jews* and *Gentiles* and to the Men of *Samaria*, and they spake with Tongues and prophesied, then they preached to all Nations, and endured all persecutions, and cured all diseases, and raised the dead to life, and were brought before Tribunals, and confessed the Name of Jesus, and convinced the blasphemous Jews out of their own Prophets, and not only prevailed upon Women and weak Men, but even upon the bravest and wisest. All the disciples of *John* the *Baptist*, the *Nazarens* and *Ebionites*, *Nicodemus* and *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, *Sergius* the *President*, *Dionysius* an *Athenian Judge*, and *Polycarpus*, *Justinus* and *Irenaeus*, *Athenagoras* and *Origen*, *Tertullian* and *Clement of Alexandria*, who could not be such fools as upon a matter not certainly true but probably false, to unravel their former principles, and to change their liberty for

for a Prison, wealth for poverty, honor for disreputation, life for death, if by such exchange they had not been secured of truth and holiness and the will of God.

But above all these was *Saul*, a bold and a witty, a zealous and learned young man, who going with Letters to persecute the Christians of *Damascus*, was by a light from Heaven called from his furious march, reproved by God's Angel for persecuting the cause of Jesus, was sent to the City, baptized by a Christian Minister, instructed and sent abroad, and he became the prodigy of the World for learning and zeal, for preaching and writing, for labor and sufferance, for government and wisdom; he was admitted to see the holy Jesus after the Lord was taken into Heaven, he was taken up into Paradise, he conversed with Angels, he saw unspeakable rayes of glory, and besides that himself said it, who had no reason to lie, who would get nothing by it here but a conjugation of troubles, and who should get nothing by it hereafter if it were false; besides this I say, that he did all those acts of zeal and obedience for the promotion of the Religion does demonstrate he had reason extraordinary for so sudden

sudden a change, so strange a labour, so frequent and incomparable sufferings: and therefore as he did and suffered so much upon such glorious motives, so he spared not to publish it to all the world, he spake it to Kings and Princes, he told it to the envious Jews; he had partners of his journey who were witnesses of the miraculous accident, and in his publication he urged the notoriousness of the fact, as a thing not feigned, not private, but done at noon day under the Tent of competent persons, and it was a thing that proved it self, for it was effective of a *present*, a *great*, and a *permanent* change.

But now it is no new wonder but a pursuance of the same conjugation of great and Divine things, that the Fame and Religion of Jesus was with so incredible a swiftness scattered over the face of the habitable World, from one end of the earth unto the other; it filled all *Asia* immediately, it passed presently to *Europe*, and to the furthest *Africans*, and all the way it went it told nothing but an holy and an humble story, that he who came to bring it into the world, died an ignominious death, and yet this death did not take away their courage, but added

much: for they could not fear death for that Master, whom they knew to have for their sakes suffered death, and came to life again. But now infinite numbers of persons of all sexes, and all ages, and all Countries came in to the *Holy Crucifix*, and he that was crucified in the reign of *Tiberius*, was in the time of *Nero*, even in *Rome* it self, and in *Nero's* family by many persons esteem'd for a God; and it was upon publick record that he was so acknowledged; and this was by a Christian, *Justin Martyr*, urged to the Senate, and to the Emperors themselves, who if it had been otherwise, could easily have confuted the bold allegation of the Christian, who yet did die for that Jesus who was so speedily reputed for a God; the Cross was worn upon breasts, printed in the air, drawn upon fore-heads, carried on banners, put upon crowns Imperial, and yet the Christians were sought for to punishments, and exquisite punishments sought forth for them; their goods were confiscate, their names odious, prisons were their houses, and so many kinds of tortures invented for them that *Domitius Ulpianus* hath spent seven Books in describing the variety of tortures the poor Christian

stian was put to at his first appearing, and yet in despite of all this, and ten thousand other objections and impossibilities, whatsoever was for them made the Religion grow, and whatsoever was against them made it grow; if they had peace, the Religion was prosperous, if they had persecution, it was still prosperous: if Princes favored them, the World came in because the Christians lived holily; if Princes were incensed, the World came in because the Christians died bravely. They sought for death with greedines, they desired to be grinded in the teeth of Lions, and with joy they beheld the wheels and the bended trees, the racks and the gibbets, the fires and the burning irons, which were like the chair of *Elias* to them, instruments to carry them to heaven, into the bosom of their beloved Jesus.

Who would not acknowledge the Divinity of this person, and the excellency of this institution, that should see Infants to weary the hands of Hangmen for the testimony of Jesus? and wise Men preach this doctrine for no other visible reward, but shame and death, poverty and banishment? and Hangmen converted by the blood of Mar-

tyrs springing upon their faces which their impious hands & cords have strain'd through their flesh? who would not have confessed the honour of Jesus, when he should see miracles done at the Tombs of Martyrs, and Devils tremble at the mention of the name of Jesus, and the World running to the honour of the poor *Nazaren*, and Kings and Queens kissing the feet of the poor servants of Jesus? Could a few Fishermen and a Publican effect all this for the son of a poor Maiden of *Judea*? can we suppose all the World, or so great a part of Mankind can consent by chance, or suffer such changes for nothing? or for any thing less than this? The son of the poor Maiden was the Son of God, and the Fishermen spake by a Divine spirit, and they catched the World with holiness and miracles, with wisdom and power bigger than the strength of all the *Roman* Legions. And what can be added to all this, but this thing alone to prove the Divinity of Jesus? He is a God, or at least is taught by God who can foretell future contingencies; and so did the holy Jesus, and so did his Disciples.

Our blessed Lord while he was alive foretold that after his death his Religion should flourish

flouriſh more than when he was alive: He foretold Perſecutions to his Diſciples; he foretold the miſſion of the holy Ghoſt to be in a very few days after his Aſcenſion, which within ten days came to paſs; he propheſied that the fact of *Mary Magdalen* in anointing the head and feet of her Lord, ſhould be publick and known as the Goſpel it ſelf, and ſpoken of in the ſame place; he foretold the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the ſigns of its approach, and that it ſhould be by War, and particularly after the manner of Prophets ſymbolically, nam'd the Nation ſhould do it; pointing out the *Roman* Eagles, he foretold his death, and the manner of it, and plainly before-hand publiſhed his Reſurrection, and told them it ſhould be the ſign to that generation, *viz.* the great argument to prove him to be the Chriſt, he propheſied that there ſhould ariſe falſe Chriſts after him, and it came to paſs to the extreme great calamity of the Nation; and laſtly, he foretold that his beloved Diſciple S. *John* ſhould tarry upon the earth till his coming again, that is, to his coming to Judgment upon *Jeruſalem*; and that his Religion ſhould be preached to the Gentiles, that it ſhould be ſcattered over

all the World, and be received by all Nations, that it should stay upon the face of the Earth till his last coming to judge all the world, and that *the gates of hell should not be able to prevail against his Church*; which Propheeie is made good thus long, till this day, and is as a continual argument to justifie the Divinity of the Author: The continuance of the Religion helps to continue it, for it proves that it came from God, who foretold that it should continue; and therefore it must continue because it came from God, and therefore it came from God because it does and shall for ever continue according to the word of the holy Jesus.

But after our blessed Lord was entred into glory, the disciples also were Prophets; *Agabus* foretold the dearth that was to be in the *Roman* Empire in the days of *Claudius Cæsar*, and that S. *Paul* should be bound at *Jerusalem*; S. *Paul* foretold the entring in of Hereticks into *Asia* after his departure; and he and S. *Peter* and S. *Jude* and generally the rest of the Apostles had two great predictions, which they used not only as a verification of the doctrine of Jesus, but as a means to strengthen the hearts of the Disciples who were so broken with

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persecution: The one was, that there should arise a Sect of vile men who should be enemies to Religion and Government, and cause a great Apostasie, which happened notoriously in the Sect of the Gnosticks, which those three Apostles and S. John notoriously and plainly do describe: And the other was, that although the Jewish Nation did mightily oppose the Religion, it should be but for a while, for they should be destroyed in a short time, and their Nation made extremely miserable, but for the Christians, if they would fly from Jerusalem and go to Pella, there should not a hair of their head perish: the verification of this Prophecy the Christians extremely long'd for and wondred it staid so long, and began to be troubled at the delay, and suspected all was not well, when the great proof of their Religion was not verified; and while they were in thoughts of heart concerning it, the sad Catastrophe did come, and swept away 1100000. of the Nation, and from that day forward the Nation was broken in pieces with intolerable calamities, they are scattered over the face of the earth, and are a vagabond Nation, but yet like oyl in a vessel of wine, broken into bubbles but kept in their

own circles, and they shall never be an united people till they are servants of the holy Jesus; but shall remain without Priest or Temple, without Altar or Sacrifice, without City or Country, without the Land of Promise, or the promise of a blessing, till our Jesus is their high Priest, and the Shepherd to gather them into his fold: And this very thing is a mighty demonstration against the Jews by their own Prophets, for when *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, and *Malachi* had Prophesied the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, and the change of the old Law, and the introduction of a new by the Messias, that this was he, was therefore certain, because he taught the World a new Law, and presently after the publication of this, the old was abrogate, and not only went into desuetude, but into a total abolition among all the World, and for those of the remnant of the scattered Jews who obstinately blaspheme, the Law is become impossible to them, and they placed in such circumstances that they need not dispute concerning its obligation: for it being *external* and *corporal ritual* and at last made also *local*, when the circumstances are impossible, the Law that was wholly ceremonial

monial and circumstantial must needs pass away, and when they have lost their Priesthood, they cannot retain the Law, as no man takes care to have his beard shaved when his head is off.

And it is a wonder to consider how the anger of God is gone out upon that miserable people, and that so great a blindness is fallen upon them, it being evident and notorious, that the old Testament was nothing but a shadow and umbrage of the new, that the Prophecies of that are plainly verified in this; that all the predictions of the Messias are most undeniably accomplished in the person of Jesus Christ, so that they cannot with any plausibleness or colour be turned any other way, and be applied to any other person, although the Jews make illiterate allegations, and prodigious dreams, by which they have fool'd themselves for 1600. years together, and still hope without reason, and are confident without revelation, and pursue a shadow while they quit the glorious body; while in the mean time the *Christian* prays for his conversion, and is at rest in the truth of Jesus, and hath certain unexpressible confidencies and internal lights, clarities of the holy Spi-

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rit of God, and loves to the holy Jesus produc'd in his soul, that he will die when he cannot dispute, and is satisfied and he knows not how, and is sure by comforts, and comforted by the excellency of his belief, which speaks nothing but holiness, and light and reason, and peace and satisfactions infinite, because he is sure that all the World can be happy if they would live by the Religion of Jesus, and that neither societies of Men nor single persons can have felicity but by this; and that therefore God who so decrees to make Men happy, hath also decreed that it shall for ever be upon the face of the earth, till the earth it self shall be no more. *Amen.*

Now if against this vast heap of things any Man shall but confront the pretences of any other Religion, and see how they fail both of reason and holiness, of wonder and Divinity, how they enter by force, and are kept up by humane interests, how ignorant and unholy, how unlearned and pitiful are their pretences, the darknesses of these must add great eminency to the brightness of that. For the Jews Religion which came from Heaven is therefore not now to be practised, because it did come

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from Heaven, and was to expire into the Christian, it being nothing but the image of this perfection; and the Jews needed no other argument but this, that God hath made theirs impossible now to be done, for he that ties to Ceremonies and outward usages, Temples and Altars, Sacrifices and Priests, troublesome and expensive rites and figures of future signification, means that there should be an abode and fixt dwelling, for these are not to be done by an ambulatory people; and therefore since God hath scattered the People into atomes and crumbs of society, without Temple or Priest, without Sacrifice or Altar, without *Urim* or *Thummim*, without Prophet or Vision, even communicating with them no way but by ordinary providence, it is but too evident, that God hath nothing to do with them in the matter of that Religion, but that it is expired, and no way obligatory to them or pleasing to him which is become impossible to be acted; whereas the Christian Religion is as eternal as the soul of a Man, and can no more cease than our spirits can die, and can worship upon Mountains and Caves, in Fields and Churches, in peace and war, in solitude and society, in persecution

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and in Sun-shine, by night and by day, and be solemnized by Clergy and Laity in the essential parts of it, and is the perfection of the soul, and the highest reason of Man, and the glorification of God.

But for the Heathen religions it is evidently to be seen, that they are nothing but an abuse of the natural inclination which all Men have to worship a God, whom because they know not, they guess at in the dark; for that they know there is and ought to be something that hath the care and providence of their affairs. But the body of their Religion is nothing but little arts of Governments, and stratagems of Princes, and devices to secure the Government of new Usurpers, or to make obedience to the Laws sure, by being sacred, and to make the yoke that was not natural, pleasant by something that is. But yet for the whole body of it who sees not that their worshippings could not be sacred, because they were done by something that is impure, they appeased their gods with adulteries and impure mixtures, by such things which *Cato* was ashamed to see, by gluttonous eatings of flesh, and impious drinkings, and they did *litare in humano sanguine*, they sacrificed Men

Men and Women and Children to their *Demons*, as is notorious in the rites of *Bacchus Omesta* amongst the Greeks, and of *Jupiter*, to whom a Greek and a Greekess, a Galatian and a Galatess were yearly offered, in the answers of the Oracles to *Calchas*, as appears in *Homer* and *Virgil*; who sees not that crimes were warranted by the example of their immortal gods, and that what did dishonor themselves, they sang to the honor of their gods, whom they affirmed to be passionate and proud, jealous and revengeful, amorous and lustful, fearful and impatient, drunken and sleepy, weary and wounded, that the Religions were made lasting by policy and force, by ignorance, and the force of custom, by the preferring an inveterate error, and loving of a quiet and prosperous evil, by the arguments of pleasure, and the correspondencies of sensuality, by the fraud of Oracles, and the patronage of vices, and because they feared every change as an Earthquake, as supposing overturnings of their old error to be the eversion of their well established Governments: and it had been ordinarily impossible that ever Christianity should have entered, if the nature and excellency of it had

had not been such as to enter like rain into a fleece of wool, or the Sun into a window without noise or violence, without emotion and disordering the political constitution, without causing trouble to any man but what his own ignorance or peevishness was pleased to spin out of his own bowels, but did establish Governments, secure obedience, made the Laws firm, and the persons of Princes to be sacred, it did not oppose force by force, nor *strike Princes for Justice*, it defended it self against enemies by patience, and overcame them by kindness, it was the great instrument of God to demonstrate his power in our weaknesses, and to do good to Mankind by the imitation of his excellent goodness.

Lastly, he that considers concerning the Religion and person of *Mahomet*, that he was a vicious person, lustful and tyrannical, that he propounded incredible and ridiculous propositions to his Disciples, that it entred by the sword, by blood and violence, by murder and robbery, that it propounds sensual rewards and allures to compliance by bribing our baseest lusts, that it conserves it self by the same means it entred, that it is unlearned and foolish, against

gainst reason, and the discourses of all wise Men, that it did no miracles and made false Prophecies: in short, that in the person that founded it, in the article it perswades, in the manner of prevailing, in the reward it offers it is unholy and foolish and rude, it must needs appear to be void of all pretence, and that no Man of reason can ever be fairly perswaded by arguments, that it is the daughter of God and came down from Heaven. Since therefore there is nothing to be said for any other Religion, and so very much for Christianity, every one of whose pretences can be proved as well as the things themselves do require, and as all the World expects such things should be proved; it follows that the holy Jesus is the Son of God, that his Religion is commanded by God, and is that way by which he will be worshipped and honoured, and that *there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved, but only by the name of the Lord Jesus.* He that puts his soul upon this cannot perish; neither can he be reproved who hath so much reason and argument for his Religion. *Sit anima mea cum Christianis*; I pray God my soul may be numbred amongst the Christians.

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THE END.